Kamigoroshi no Eiyuu to Nanatsu no Seiyaku

Alternate Title: The God Slaying Hero and the Seven Covenants

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Original WebNovel

Synopsis:

Three years ago, to defeat the Demon God who was trying to destroy this world, thirteen braves are summoned from another world. Each of them had varied ages and gender. Each of them was bestowed with cheat like powers not normal in this world.

One asked for indomitable will against any adversity.

One asked for god-like magic power.

One asked for a power to heal everyone.

One asked for a power to cook foods that will bring smile to everyone.

And so forth, each of them conveyed their wish and were granted what they asked for so that they could complete their quest. They then departed, on adventure to defeat the demon god. For two years, they journeyed together and survived many hardships in this world, through joy, sadness, and discord; they persevered and in the end brilliantly defeated the demon god, brought peace to this world and then decided to live there. Among those thirteen, is one man that hid his whereabouts and disappeared after defeating the Demon God, but everyone would say:

It is he, the center of the thirteen braves, who is far more heroic than others.

It is he, who valiantly stands on the foremost line, protecting the others behind him.

It is he, the strongest man that killed the demon god.

And it is he, the only one who is blessed and loved the most by the goddess.

(source: edited version of the synopsis translated and posted by amatsunagi on animesukiforums.)

(Note: I'll be translating the Web Novel version)

Translator:

https://shikkakutranslations.wordpress.com/kamigoroshi-no-eiyuu-to-nanatsu-no-seiyaku/

Chapter 0

As I woke up, I felt a bit nostalgic.

As I raised my head from the wooden table, the joints of my body ached a bit. Probably because I slept in a weird position.

I stretched my body muscles which felt really nice.

Next, I shook my head as an unpleasant *gokigoki* dull sound came. Due to that sound, the old man shopkeeper behind the counter gave a frown and looked towards me.

“You’re finally awake.”

His words sounded especially harsh as he polished a cup in his hands.

Envying that behaviour a bit, I opened my eyelids heavy due to alcohol and turned my face towards him.

“Yeah, the sake here is really delicious. I was able to see a really good dream.”

I think it was a dream of the past.

I felt something inside my chest become a bit warmer.

I wonder if my old comrades were still doing fine.

Thinking that, I once again shook my head.

I had shared everything with those guys and girls.

Summoned as a Brave, expectations as a hero, and was wished to kill a god.

—-It’s really nostalgic. In my chest dwelled nostalgia about those days and a slight bit of regret.

Behaved like a brave, returned triumphantly as heroes and were envied as God-slayers.

I wonder how my comrades think about me who ran away from that pressure.

They would probably resent me, I concluded.

Unfortunately, I didn’t have the courage to ascertain that.

And I had no intention to do so either from here onwards.

On the counter dimly lit by a candle, I brought out a copper coin from

my almost empty purse and spoke with a dried voice.

"I'll leave the calculations to you."

"Yeah, just go back already. Don't get drunk and fall asleep on the side of the road alright?"

"haha. I'll be careful."

Getting up from my wooden chair, I ended up stumbling a bit. I can't move my legs properly due to the alcohol.

Looking at me like that, the shopkeeper once again gave a sigh.

It seems the time has already become quite late. Even though it's night, there's no other customer who is still drinking here.

Well, another reason might be that there aren't many inhabitants in the first place as well though.

I once again bowed towards the old shopkeeper who kept the store open till I woke up and left the store.

The cold wind stroked my body and I felt sobering up a little.

Actually, my steps are still quite unstable.

Thinking that this is the end of a man who was once a Brave and had been cheered as a Hero, I could only laugh.

It has been 3 years since we were summoned. It took 2 years to defeat the Demon God.

The past 1 year, I parted from my comrades and drew back to this village to live leisurely with money received as the reward for killing the Demon God.

Maybe, they might have already forgotten about me.

When I thought that, rather than feeling miserable I felt relieved instead.

I was not someone who had the capacity to become a Brave or a Hero.

A different world—-13 people who were summoned from Earth to become Saviours.

To defeat the ‘Demon God’ that wanted to destroy the world, 12 people with cheat skills were summoned along with me.

I was not a magician that could easily defeat the world’s strongest magician easily, neither was I swordsman that could cut up a 10m golem with a single slash.

It’s not like I have good mind, neither am I good at strategies nor am I

good at healing people. I'm not skilful enough to make lots of items either.

It was painful to be with those guys and girls who could do that/

Different world summoning. Saviour. The Divine Protection of the Goddess. The trust of the royalty. The expectations of the people.

I really think that those 12 who moved forwards while bearing all that are really amazing.

But unfortunately, all that was too heavy for me.

"Ah.....I'm sleepy."

In the night sky, the moon shined with a reddish tinge.

That colour was the proof that this was a different world. I drowsily sighed.

If I kept on sleeping like that, I think I would dream about the past again.

Somehow confident of that fact, I kept on walking through the streets at night.

In this world that has no electricity, it became awfully dark after the sun

set.

In the royal capital, there were street lights made of magical energy so it was slightly brighter but that was not so in this rural village where I currently am.

Relying on the dim light of the moon, I headed for the inn where I have rented a room.

I yawned once more.

What should I do tomorrow?

I thought about it as I kicked the pebbles with my hide boots.

Well I'll think of something somehow.

Taking some requests at the adventurer guild to earn some small change, eat meals and drink sometimes.

Three years after coming to this world. 2 years were spent in defeating the demon god and the remaining 1 year in the way I mentioned above.

The other guys seem to be using their abilities to make a living apparently.

Popularising a game that was popular in our original world, improving

the government and improving the living standard in general.

I even heard that they were living as knights at the royal castle and earning money by defeating monsters as well.

Well, changing the world sounds much more difficult than saving it actually. But they still must be living to their fullest I think.

I'm sure they would not be living a life like me who has trouble for money.

"It's cold."

As the night breeze stroked my body, I shivered from its coldness.

And I sighed.

No internet, no car, no way to go back to our world and no way to get into contact with parents or friends.

It's just like our connections were instantly severed.

But still, I still can't come to hate this world.

Unable to hate it but at the same time unable to like it like the others either, I have been living here half-assedly. If I was asked whether I like it or hate it, I'll probably say I like it. But I really can't say that with much

pride.

Really, what am I doing?

Sigh

As I looked up, the reddish moon was looking down on me.

“I need to gather some money.”

Since I paid the hotel charges in advance and in full, I’ll be fine for a while but the contents of my purse will soon be empty.

A Brave summoned from another world and a God Slaying hero——I’m one of them.

But even then, I’m troubled about the money for tomorrow’s meal right now.

That reality was really laughable.

Chapter 1 Hero and the Newbie Adventurer

Yamada Renji was a normal working adult of the society.

His dream during his childhood was to be a pro baseball player.

At school, his results were around the hundredth rank in a school of 400 students.

His hobby is reading. After graduating from high school, driving also became one.

It’s not like he hated being social either.

According to him, without revealing too much individuality and to blend in with the surroundings was also a part of social disposition.

He was not a leader type of person. If one were to describe him, he was a mob character no.3 or villager C type of a person.

His age was 28 this year. He was summoned when he was 25.

After getting summoned, the first thing he felt was not enjoyment like the other boys and girls around him but was-what about work? How to earn our livelihood? And other such truly realistic things.

This world was made with 3 countries and 5 continents.

Firstly, the country where Yamada Renji and the others were summoned, the human country [Imnesia].

The country ruled by the demi humans, [Elfreim]. This country was built on the largest continent.

And, the continent of darkness where the demons live, [Abenelm]. It ruled over three continents and is the largest country.

13 humans were summoned to this different world. One of the three gods that created this world, the goddess [Astraera] gave them blessings in the form of cheat-like powers and they became god slayers.

Most of them were in their teens and were students.

The only one in their twenties were me and 2 men and 1 woman. No matter how I looked at it, it was an inconsistent group. (T/N: yup, the POV changed somewhere in between. Probably when they started explaining the world.)

……It's a really nostalgic memory.

We fought, clashed with each other and separated. But still, in the end, we joined hands with each other, overcame dangers and laughed.

Our relationships weren't exactly bad but they were not really good

either.

There was a fight to decide who will take the Holy sword of the Goddess.

Who to save, who to abandon. We even cried at reality during such times.

Asking for food even when we could not read, and then sharing shitty food with each other was also something that happened.

The guys going to peek at the women's bath and then returning while almost getting killed, was also a great memory. At that time, we felt more risk to our lives than the times when we faced high level demons in the area.

Yeah, it really is a nostalgic and much missed memory.

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[Are you awake yet, sleepyhead?]

That voice came from near my pillow.

It resounded inside my head. A voice like a man yet like a woman's, it was a neutral gendered voice.

As I turned my sleepy eyes, I saw the medal that I had gotten used to seeing in this past year.

The rim is golden and in the centre, a jade is attached. Around it, 7 different coloured stones have been embedded.

Three years ago, I received this talking medal before leaving on the journey to defeat the Demon God.

It is the origin of the cheat skill that I, Yamada Renji, possesses.

It's a medal that talks, has a soul and a will of its own.

"…….Good Morning."

[You're still weak at mornings as usual.]

Leave me be. I muttered inside my mind as my head swayed due to hangover.

As I raised my body, dazzling sunlight shined through from the gaps between the curtains.

“I overslept.”

[Seriously. It seems you had fun alone yesterday night it seems.]

“I just went drinking.”

[I wonder about that.]

Getting up from the bed, I poured water out of the water jug kept on the table inside my glass.

As I drank it in a single gulp, I felt the pain from my hangover getting a bit lesser.

[Go wash your face. It looks really bad.]

“Are you my mother?”

[I wouldn’t want a child like you ever.]

Seriously.

This lifestyle that depends on how I live every day.

Although it can be called having freedom but right now I have neither my own house nor any savings.

A guy who will have to discuss with the contents of his wallet before deciding on today's meal; no one would want to take a guy like that as a son.

Continuing our usual conversation, I poured water from the jug inside the basin installed in the room.

This world does not have a water line supply system.

The manager of the inn would go to the river everyday to bring water for use. Water is precious here.

Washing my face with that water, I shaved my beard.

By the time I completely refreshed myself, both my hangover and drowsiness had completely subsided

"ahh I really want to live an enjoyable life."

"……Really."

The medal and I both gave a sigh. Well, I wonder if I can use the word 'both' here. I and one thing would be a better way to say it.

As I thought such things, I finished changing.

My clothes were a tunic and dark green trousers. With this, I also look like a person from this world.

Sword? Of course I don't have something like that.

This world as a world of swords and magic but unfortunately I had to pawn off the famous sword I received from the kingdom since I was low on money.

If I had sold it to a collector, I could have received quite a big amount but unfortunately the one I sold it too was a weapon shop in a rural village. So I only received enough money to feed myself for one week.

After knowing that, I was scolded by this medal for two days straight.

I have a personality that doesn't dwell too much on the past. I did feel down about it though.

"Let's work hard to collect medicinal herbs today as well, I guess?"

[A God slaying hero is working hard to collect medicinal herbs…….pathetic.]

"Such honest and plain jobs are also important you know?"

[Let the villagers and newbie adventurers do it, such plain and honest jobs. And you should take on the more riskier jobs.]

“No way, it’s scary.”

Even I think it’s pathetic.

During the journey to defeat the Demon God, I fought against a 3m big wolf, a 10m big devil and even human eating plants.

But, each and every one of them were defeated by my comrades.

A swordsman that possessed inhumane ability, a mage that was said to match even a God, and a warrior that could swing a weapon bigger than himself with ease.

Surrounded by such guys, I was nothing more than a villager C level of guy.

It’s amazing they didn’t abandon me I think.

Rather than that, I still think its weird that I ended up journeying with such guys.

It’s amazing I came out alive. That must be the greatest miracle ever.

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In every village and town of the Imnesia continent, there will always be an adventurer guild no matter what the size of that village or town was.

There, requests from the people were collected and those completed such requests were rewarded.

The Demon got had been defeated and the number of demons had decreased but still the occupation of adventurers continued like always and did not die out. That was because there were still other jobs like collecting medicinal herbs or collecting some specific ingredients and materials or arresting thieves etc as well.

An adventurer was the biggest and the most risky job in this world.

Leaving the demon god aside, even normal demons could not be defeated by adventurers easily in one-on-one battles.

Physical strength, Intelligence, magical energy. Even with high levels in all these fields, a slime famous in RPGs was still the worst enemy one could face in reality.

It won't die no matter how much you cut or hit it. They needed to be either burned or frozen by magic to be defeated.

What the hell is that monster?! That was how I cursed it the first time I saw it.

Even I have a somewhat strong self-confidence. Just the fact that I stuck through till the end of the journey to defeat the Demon King granted a small level of pride to me.

But nevertheless, I have no intention to go fighting demons alone.

If I was with that cheat group, then it might have been fine but I don't have such a power.

Goblin? Kobold? Those guys live in swarms and I would lose my life if I slipped even a little. I have no intention to solo such monsters.

I, who only had the answer 'no' to most of the things, should just diligently go to the nearby forest to collect medicinal herbs as usual. Deciding that inside my heart, I came in front of the guild.

Inside my pocket, the medal is complaining as usual.

This cursed medal is recommending me to go defeat demons for some reason.

Well there are reasons behind it as well but, that's, well, I'll explain gradually.

Or rather, it's a major pain in the ass.

[Renji, you.....that face, it's the same face you make when you feel doing

something is a pain.]

"I intend to properly do my job."

Just what does this medal think of me?

I can perfectly earn enough money to keep myself living.

Also, don't complain about someone's face from inside a pocket. I was born with this face.

Complaining inside my mind, I opened the door of the guild. Inside a few adventurers were there.

Most of them were younger than me. Just one of them was big enough to be mistaken for a bear.

In Imnesia, it was not unusual for people to work at the guild from their early teens.

Or rather, it was a world where children less than 10yrs old were also working to earn money.

By the way, the jobs done by children were no risk jobs like gathering medicinal herbs to which I have taken a liking to.

I, who had yet to get bored of gathering medicinal herbs, became the

centre of attention of all people inside.

……their gazes hurt. I apologised inside my mind. Really sorry, to take the jobs for newbies.

Also, only I can hear the voice of this cursed medal. This really is a cursed medal.

Just how many times had I embarrassed myself during the beginning…….just remembering it makes me irritated.

It could make so that everyone else could also hear it, but it'll stand out too much so that's also troublesome.

I don't want to stand out.

Not a God slaying hero but Villager C. That's my current stance.

"Good……Morning?"(Renji)

"It's afternoon already. You must have overslept after drinking too much till late at night, right?"

Now that's harsh.

While thinking that, I walked towards the boy who said that while sighing at the reception.

And suddenly I realized.

“Good morning?”

“Hello.”

I answered like this who gave her greeting with a smile while tilting her head to a side.

To think that she would actually reply back to my greeting…….

I’m the one greeted first yet I’m the one who is surprised as well.

Her honey coloured hair swayed as a pleasant smell came to my nose.

She had looks that would make 7/10 people say that she was a beauty. The rest 3 would probably say that she was extremely beautiful.

She had green eyes, a tall nose and a slightly small mouth.

Her height was around the average height of a woman. She came to around my shoulder.

Her clothes were similar to a normal adventurer made out skins of various monsters.

The gemmed necklace around her neck was the only womanly thing among her boorish attire and equipment.

Well, I tried to give an impression like an expert but somehow this girl doesn't really feel like an adventurer.

Also her equipment looks brand new as well.

"Are you a newcomer?"(renji)

"Ah, so you can tell?"

The beauty gave a smile.

So this is what a smile that feels like a flower bloomed looks like.

As I looked from above, I could also see the valley made by forcefully wearing a breastplate over her—-oh my.

"Your face is grinning."

"Children should shut up."(Renji)

[…….How deplorable.]

Shut up.

Don’t interrupt my concentration to remember this beauty who I might never meet again.

“Are you here to look for a job? I also want to take the job to collect medicinal herbs though.”(renji)

She had nodded when I asked if she was a newcomer but is she really planning on becoming an adventurer?

No qualifications are needed to become an adventurer.

As long as you don’t have any criminal record, anyone can become one. In truth, even a criminal can become an adventurer if he can fake his social status.

Most of the women who try to become adventurers are usually ones that have money problems.

The rest of them have some kind of mission like us.

Well, that’s a rare exception though.

Most of the adventurers take this job to earn money quickly. If you want to safely earn money then you should become a shopkeeper of a store like this young boy.

But the girl in front of me was……..at least it doesn’t look she has money

problems.

Or rather, I wouldn't doubt it if someone said that she was actually a noble. Somehow, I can feel some sort of elegance that's not found in us unrefined adventurers. Also, I decided to warn her so that she doesn't take my job as well.

I heard a sigh come from inside my pocket, but it must be my imagination.

"No, I here to subjugate demons."(beauty)

"....."

I moved my sight from the beauty towards the boy at the reception.

"No way. That's impossible. Without any experience its too dangerous."(boy)

"Thought as much."(Renji)

"Or rather, you should be the one to subjugate demons and not collect medicinal herbs."(boy)

"No way, it's too scary."

Look here, I pointed towards my waist.

There was no weapon there.

I had pawned off my sword, though I spent it all yesterday night…….that's a bit sad.

I don't even have something like a dagger.

All I have is this body.

Do you want me to fist fight with a demon? That's impossible. With my fists, I can't even break open fruits let alone things like rocks.

A monster that could break rocks with his fists was——for the time being, let's just say, that I have 2 acquaintances that can do that.

They are cheat holders after all.

"Lazy bastard."(boy)

"My dream is to earn money while enjoying and live my life in peace."(renji)

[Abandon such a dream.]

Don't find faults in my dream, you stupid medal.

“That’s a brilliant dream. Can you earn money comfortably?”(beauty)

“Dreams are called dreams because they never come true.”(boy)

My heart was pierced by the beauty’s smile who was encouraging my dream.

Also, the boy at the reception counter said some philosophical things as he sighed.

“You won’t be able to become a proper adult if you’re like that, boy.”(renji)

“If it means becoming someone like you, then I’m fine with not becoming a proper adult.”(boy)

Such harsh words.

Shrugging my shoulders, I stretched my hands towards the bundle of requests kept on the table.

This bundle was divided into three categories. They are-gathering of materials and herbs, escorting villagers or carriages, and subjugation of monsters/demons.

If one were to go to the royal capital, the thickness of each bundle was-monster subjugation the biggest, second was escort missions and last and the thinnest was material procurement ones.

Well, that's inconsequential, I'm not going to go there anyway.

If I was found by my old comrades it'll be troublesome.

While I was thinking of such things, the woman was moving towards the bundle of monster subjugation requests.

She has such pretty and thin fingers.

Yup, she really is a complete newbie adventurer.

"Is there any subjugation quest that even I can do?"(beauty)

"No."(boy)

Immediate reply. Well it's obvious though.

As she looked towards that bear faced adventurer inside the guild, he averted his eyes.

Probably, she might have consulted him before I came here.

His face is rough, but maybe he had invited her to his party.

The woman is beautiful after all, nobody would be reluctant to invite

her but subjugating monsters was really not acceptable.

The people of this world do not possess cheat like power like me.

They have to fight with their lives on the line even after expertly training in sword or magic.

The main reason for the deaths among young adventurers is due to them recklessly taking on subjugation quests like this woman, out of curiosity, and get killed.

That's all there was to it.

But I silently handed one of the memos from the collecting items pile and gave it to her.

"It's dangerous you know?"(Renji)

"I'm well aware of the danger."(beauty)

funsu the woman struck her chest with her left arm.

It swayed. It really swayed slightly behind the armour.

[Tch]

Inside my pocket, I felt killing intent leaking out as the medal clicked its

tongue so I quickly averted my gaze.

It's because it is unbecoming of a gentleman to stare at a woman's chest, obviously.

ahem I coughed once.

"I can't really recommend that."

"But still, I can only subjugate monsters now. That is the only way left for me."

Those words sounded really serious. It could be, that her voice felt like crying a bit as well.

Her voice was serious but……I looked towards the boy at the reception behind the woman.

He was shaking his head.

Well obviously.

If they allowed a newbie to go on a monster subjugation, it'll be considered as a failure of the management staff of the guild.

After earning some experience through herb gathering and escort missions, only then is one allowed to take subjugation quests. Also, they

will still not be allowed to go alone.

It must be a party of at least 2 or 3 members. It's the same for even pro adventurers who have been doing this for many years.

That's how strong the monsters of this world are.

Even the lowest Goblin or Kobolds, if they attacked in a swarm, could make those pros become extremely cautious.

And Slime is traumatic experience.

If a magician took care of it from long range then it'll be fine, but if an adventurer challenged it at close range, it was nothing less than a nightmare.

"It seems you have special circumstances but you see."

Only this cannot be helped with. That has been decided by the guild.

As an adventurer, one must abide by the rules.

If you cannot do so, then you're just an outlaw.

I took one page of herb gathering and handed it over to the woman.

"First finish herb gathering and escort missions. Soon, you'll be able to

get experience for monster subjugation within 1 month at least.”

I can’t say anything more than that.

Looking away from me, the woman left the guild. It seems she’ll accept the herb gathering quest.

“Too bad. I wanted to get closer to her…..”(renji)

“Renji-san wouldn’t suit her at all. Yup.”(boy)

Don’t say that happily boy. I’ll cry.

As I saw the woman off, my shoulder was clapped from behind.

As I looked back, the bear faced old man was there.

“You weren’t wrong. I had said the same thing.”(bearface)

“I see.”

I wonder if it’d be fine.

Looking at her, I feel that she might do something reckless alone.

I’m saying that from experience. Well if I need to thank someone, it’d be

the comrades I had travelled with……I felt her actions were very similar to those youths.

In this case, will it be my responsibility because I didn't lend her a helping hand?

…….I want to think that's not so.

[That girl is going to do something extremely rash.]

I sighed.

I should have known.

I took a memo from the herb gathering bundle and left the guild.

I brought out a coin from my pocket and flipped it with my thumb.

As I grabbed the coin as it fell, I opened my palm.

The coin was, tails. It's a miss.

"Shall we go, Ermenhilde?"

[Roger that, my master.]

I heard the neutral gendered voice, as if it was having fun.

Chapter 2 Hero and the Newbie Adventurer (2)

When you think of monsters you think of forests.

I don’t know who started this, but it is apparently a part of the mistaken common sense of this world.

By the way, we also thought the same when we first came to the world. A bit away from the highway were the grasslands and even further were the dark forests.

There, the encounter rate would be higher, was what one of our game expert comrade had said.

But that’s not actually true.

Sure, there are definitely monsters in the forest. But in actuality, those grasslands and plains were actually more troublesome.

Especially, those goblins that the woman with the honey coloured hair was looking for.

Those guys come in swarms. They would definitely not act alone. The least would be in a group of three but at times they also move in groups of 10 as well.

If it was a cave, they could be dealt with without getting yourself surrounded by them.

But in a plain grassland, they'll surround you with numbers and attack from your blind spot.

Is that woman aware of such things?

[Your personality is still the same.]

"Really.....even though it won't do me anything good."

Since I couldn't refute it, I agreed.

Just how many times have I worked like this for free.

Even though I have money problems, I still do things that won't earn me anything.

Also its pretty difficult when everyone around you puts faith in you.

No matter what anyone says, defeating monsters is the most rewarding job of an adventurer.

An adventurer who doesn't fight will be looked at with a suitable gaze.

Especially me, who doesn't take any other quest than herb gathering which is free of danger.

But that’s because I can live with just that.

I won’t come under any danger.

Otherwise, I won’t be able to stay alive. Especially me, who was the weakest among the 13.

[Haah]

Don’t sigh, I’ll also become sad.

A rescue fairy had not come nor was I requested by anyone.

So, there will be no reward. It’ll be just work for me.

I understand if you want to sigh. I understand but please forgive me.

Isn’t saving a person a beautiful thing? I wish I could get a reward for that as well though.

If I can save that beautiful woman, I think I’ll ask her about it.

It’s not like I’m a saint. And I can’t live on just air either.

I need money to keep living. To eat, to rent a room at an inn, and also to get some equipment, I need money.

.....seriously, we really worked completely for free when we were heroes.

Everything might have been for the sake of the people but it was never for our own self.

It's really a truth I can cry to.

[O.Renji, near your feet.]

That's unusual. The cursed medal Ermenhilde raised a voice with excitement.

Just as that voice had said, as I looked near my feet, I saw a copper coin.

In this world, the value system was copper coin -> gold coin -> silver coin, in that order.

Normally you'd think that gold should have more value but gold could not be enchanted with magic and it was heavier on top of it.

Well silver was also heavy but it could be enchanted with magic and was also useful against ghosts and undeads making them lose regenerating power, or turning them to ash.

Due to that, in this world, different from the usual fantasy world, the value of silver and gold had been reversed.

This made me think that the Gold Armours shown in Fantasies must have been so heavy.

I want to try wearing that once. Though I think I won't be able to even move after that.

Well anyway, leaving that aside, I picked up the copper coin from the ground.

"Good job."

[With this you can buy two pieces of bread.]

For the time being, my problem for today's dinner has been solved.

By the way, one piece of copper coin can buy two pieces of bread or one piece of jerky.

To have lunch at a slightly stylish restaurant, you'll need about 20 copper coins.

Fufun, while humming, I walked through the plains with light steps.

You really should always help people. Yup.

[.....Ah, I feel like crying a bit.]

“Can you even cry with a body like that?”

[Shut up……this poor lifestyle, it’s piercing into the core of my body.”

Looks like, it is feeling down.

Probably, due to overly huge pride, it was unable to bear the fact that it actually became happy from finding small change on the road.

It happens sometimes so I should just leave it be.

Even after feeling down so much, if it actually felt happy from finding small change, there is already no room for saving.

Also, there’s the fact that Ermenhilde found it faster than me, so it really can’t be helped.

As I walked while flipping the copper coin with my thumb, I heard the faint sound of swords clashing.

“As expected……”

I gave a sigh.

Why do young ones always do reckless things.

As I moved my gaze, I couldn't see the woman. In my sight was a 3m big rock that had been marked by the village.

I had thought that she'd move towards the places that stood out, and it seems I was right.

Probably, the woman is currently on the other side of the rock.

To make sure that I'm not too late, I trotted closer towards the rock and decided to peek and see the situation.

The first thing that came into my sight was the woman with honey coloured hair that I had just met earlier.

Some parts of her clothes had been torn, but at least she still looks fine. I breathed a sigh in relief.

And facing her was a monster at the same height of an elementary schooler, with ashen skin; it was Goblins.

In its hand were long swords, battleaxes and hammers that must have been stolen from an adventurer.

It had a big and tall nose compared to its face and its ears were large as well. If one were to put the two ears together it might be big enough as its face, I think.

Goblins looked like proud creatures to me.

Though it is only my personal judgement gained from the many times I had to fight them.

Those Goblins swung their weapons lightly and were slowly driving the woman to a corner.

[fumu. So she was still alive.]

“Oh, you’re back to normal?”

[Shut up. I’ll kill you.]

“yeah, yeah.”

While ignoring its threats and jeers, I observed the woman as she fought the numerous Goblins.

Not much time must have passed since the start of battle.

Back then she didn’t have a weapon but right now she had pretty good looking short sword.

She must have gone to the weapon shop after parting from me and then gone off to hunting.

Probably, it’s been around 10mins or so.

But still, the woman was breathing heavily and was holding the light short sword with both of her hands.

There were 5 goblins and each of them seemed pretty composed.

After all they are superior in both skill and numbers.

If they attacked while surrounding someone, even a intermediate level adventurer could face defeat.

They could instantly take care of a newbie adventurer. But without being to forceful, they're waiting for their enemy to weaken and stop moving.

That's the most troublesome part of monsters. They had the intelligence to make sure they have the advantage in a fight.

This time, they were using their difference in numbers to weaken their enemy.

Because this an open grassland, if they surround the enemy, they could attack from blind spots and even if the enemy were to block it, he'll still exhaust lot of concentration and stamina quickly.

When inside a cave, there are times when they even lay down traps as well. Ambushes or pitfalls, *etc.* that's how intelligent they are.

Especially humanoid monsters are strikingly so.

[She doesn't look like she'll hold much longer.]

"I know."

In my sight, the woman keeps on getting cornered.

The only reason they haven't killed her yet is because they're playing with her.

When your prey is just one and an amateur at that, it's not weird for them to have sadistic tendencies.

Well thanks to that I was able to make it in time though.

I know that it's already a miracle for her to have held out against 5 goblins for 10 whole mins.

While thinking that, I brought out the medal from my pocket and gripped it in my left hand.

"Lend me your strength, Ermenhilde."

[Roger that, my master.]

The jeering atmosphere till now completely disappeared.

While fighting, it is always serious. The opponents are just small fry but there's a difference between composure and carelessness.

I know that human lives can disappear easily just because of slight carelessness.

In my left hand, warmth started appearing. The magical energy of the source of my cheat ability, Ermenhilde, took form.

One knife. Five Daggers.

There are no decorations. It's a boorish weapon with stress on utility.

Confirming the weapons, I put the medal back inside my pocket.

Holding the knife in my left hand, I fixed the daggers on my belt.

"Really, as long as I have you, I don't really need to buy any weapons."

[Don't mistake their use, definitely.]

"I know."

I'm a [God Slayer] and you're the [God Slaying Weapon].

I won’t forget that in my whole life.

As I said that, I jumped out from the shadow of the rock and threw a dagger.

Without even being able to perceive me, the dagger pierced through its head and the goblin died. Red blood stained the grasslands.

Taking out another dagger, I once again threw it. I bring down another one. That makes 2 down.

After that they finally become aware of the intruder that is me and put up their guards.

I threw another dagger but it was struck down by the long sword.

I wanted to finish them off with just daggers but…….I guess that’s that.

The world isn’t such an easy place.

“Ah.”

I ignored the woman as she raised a sound in relief.

3 remain. I’m at a disadvantage if we consider just the numbers.

I have confidence in my superior ability, but if I get surrounded, I could

only lose then.

Changing the knife to my right hand, I held a dagger in my left.

Two sword style. But, unfortunately I'm a right hander.

"Shaa!!"

I stopped the long sword's attack with my dagger.

With having the ability to avert the attack, my left hand went numb but I swung the knife and tore its throat away.

The sharpness of weapons created by Ermenhilde is terrific. I didn't feel any resistance at all.

The spurt of blood soiled my clothes and struck my cheek as well. I ended up frowning due to its unpleasantness.

By the time I took care of this one, the other two of them attacked me from both sides at the same time.

I threw the dagger in my left hand towards one of them.

Since my hand was numb, let alone proper aim, even the blade was not in the front.

But still, it stopped its advance to strike down the dagger with its weapon.

And their cooperation to attack together also got disturbed.

In that instant, I faced the other one coming towards me.

It raised the hammer overhead but before it could bring it down, I cut apart the its handle.

The goblin, who was holding it with both hands, lost its balance and the hammer lost its effectiveness.

Probably it didn't expect the iron grip to be cut apart, the Goblic seemed to panic and stopped moving in front of me.

In that instant, I beheaded it.

One more remaining——-as I looked back, the remaining one had run away at full speed.

"fuu."

I breathed a sigh in relief.

I did it somehow.

I wiped away the blood that stuck my cheek and clothes.

This, will the stain even go away after I wash it?

If I need to buy a new one, it'll mean more expenses.

[Good good, it seems your skill hasn't dulled yet.]

"No way."

I was just lucky.

I don't know why but this medal always misunderstands me for someone very strong.

Please leave me alone from that.

Just because I now those 12 Godslayers doesn't mean that I'm also as strong as them.

Unlike the others, I'm not that strong.

My physical abilities are bit higher than the people of this world thanks to the World transfer compensation, but I'm still confident of losing against a first class swordsman or a magician.

Even the fight against goblins, those guys could have done it much

better than me.

One-hit kill. That's how they would have done it.

If it was a magician then one magic attack from a long range.

Those kinds of guys are the [God Slayers].

"I not very good at fighting."

As I muttered that, I walked towards the woman, who was the main objective this time.

Due to the sudden developments, she was sitting in the grasslands while she raised her eyes and looked at me dumbfounded.

That action looked pretty cute.

[You're grinning again.]

"....."

I want to believe that's not true.

I hid my mouth with the sleeve of my clothes and *ahem* cleared my throat.

“I don’t know why you’re so fixated on subjugating monsters but if you’re this reckless you’ll die very easily, you know?”

Die. The woman shuddered on hearing that word.

Probably, she didn’t even think about herself dying back at the guild.

It’s pretty common among newbies. Also, the fact she’s still alive makes her pretty lucky.

Normally, without anyone to help, she would have been tormented to death by the goblins.

I cut off the fangs of the goblins with my knife. If one were to hand it over to the guild, you can get reward for the subjugation.

Not just goblins, it’s the same for every monster.

Normally one would bring back a part that can be used as material or a part that won’t decay.

If its something as big as a dragon, even if you were not to subjugate it, you can get quite a lot of money from selling its scales.

Well, the reward for goblins is about 10 copper coins I think.

Since I had not accepted the request officially, it might be a little lesser though.

By the way, in case of herb gathering, even after spending the whole day, you'd earn about 5 copper coins.

As expected, killing monsters earns a lot of money but it's bad for my heart.

I don't like it.

"if you have learned something, then raise your abilities by first doing the jobs given by the guild——'kay."

As I put the goblin fangs inside my pocket and looked back……the woman was crying.

She was sobbing really badly but tears and various fluids were falling out.

I panicked and looked away as the woman was making an expression not expected from an adult.

[You made her cry, you made her cry.]

"Are you a child?"

As I muttered in a small voice, I hit the medal inside my pocket.

I rummaged through the goblin's equipments to find something valuable till the woman stopped crying.

[.....this is basically a robbery.]

Or rather, if the opponent weren't monsters this would definitely be counted as a robbery.

"It'll earn me some money after all."

[This is a scene that really makes me doubt whether you're actually a hero or not.]

The long sword is too chipped, the hammer's grip was cut apart, so these two won't get me much.

But it'll still get me something so I still decided to take it back.

The battleaxe was still fine so it should get me quite some money. It's a good find.

The equipment was pelt and breastplates but.....but it stinks like hell so I'm wondering what to do.

Will it even be usable even if I took it back?

Even if I leave it here, the corpses will be eaten by other monsters and the equipment would end up being reused by other goblins or kobolds with intelligence.

Unn, as I was thinking, I felt a presence behind me.

As I looked back, the woman had stood up.

“Have you calmed down?”(renji)

On my question, the woman gave a nod.

It seems she’s still feeling down. Well, it’s pretty obvious though it can’t be helped.

One actually recovers from something like that quickly would be the weirder one.

“Then, let’s return to the village. I’ll see you off.”

Shouldering the battleaxe, I held the sword and the broken hammer in my empty hand.

I decided to leave the armour. I should be able to get quite the sum from just these weapons.

I can’t ask this woman to feel such a stink either.

The weapons, and in my pocket were the 4 fangs of the goblins.

I’d be able to live luxuriously for two days with that. My footsteps became lighter as I realized that.

Although my objective was supposed to be saving the woman but I didn’t feel like my objective had changed either.

[…….how deplorable.]

“It has become your favourite phrase in the past year hasn’t it, those words?”

[Kuh]

“?”

As the woman looked at me with a questioning gaze as I talked to myself, I replied her that it was nothing.

I unconsciously ended up talking out loud.

I really can’t help that.

I think it’s normal as a human to talk back when someone talks to you.

Chapter 3 Hero and the Newbie Adventurer (3)

After ordering some tasty drinks at the only inn of the village, I came and sat in front of the woman at the table.

She seems to have calmed a lot from the battle against the goblins but her expression was still dark.

Well, coming so close to dying, I guess it's only natural. It'd be nice if this doesn't become a trauma for her though.

Since the atmosphere didn't allow me to talk either, we just faced each other waiting for the drinks to arrive.

It seems she was the same as she fidgeted around.

Is it weird of me to think that that action of hers looked actually cute?

Since she was still equipped with the leather breastplate, the gap in between was——

[You…….really treat every woman the same.]

An extremely fed up voice came.

Although I was the only one who could hear it, I still felt a bit down.

Well, in actuality, my heart isn't actually that weak though.

Living in this different world, even if one doesn't want to, his mind and heart will be trained naturally.

"Um, thank you very much."

As I was thinking other things, the woman in front of me gave her thanks.

As she bowed, her honey coloured hair hung down and hid her expression.

Putting her hair back with her fingers, she looked towards me with nervousness in her eyes.

Huh? She seems to be frightened of me?

[Although they were just goblins, you did kill 4 of them alone after all.]

Oh, so that's why.

Although I used a surprise attack, I ended up working too hard it seems.

I guess I overdid it.

In the guild of a rural area like this, she must not have expected that there would be such a strong adventurer.

Though, I was only lucky this time.

The fact that the daggers flew straight, that I was able to block the goblin's attack and the surprise attack had made them panic, all were lucky things due to which I was able to win so skilfully.

[After showing such a violent fight, it's only normal for an amateur to be fearing you.]

"Shaddup."

"?"(woman)

I ended up saying that out loud involuntarily again. The woman, who couldn't hear Ermenhilde, looked at me questioningly.

After all it must have looked like I was talking to myself.

In fact, the woman didn't even seem much alarmed considering the current situation. She must have nerves of steel.

From here onwards, when saving someone, I'll try to save them by helping them run away rather than fighting the monsters.

Well, I have saved people quite a few times in the past year but failed to do the aforementioned every time though.

While I was thinking such things, the landlady of the inn brought us fruit juice.

By the way, my drink was simply milk. Even though I didn't ask for it, she automatically brought the cheapest one for me.

I'm thankful that she is aware of the pitiful state of my purse.

I thanked her with my gaze and gave a thumbs up.

[……this is so pathetic.]

"Milk is good for the body. I love it."

[Your favourite is still alcohol which isn't really good for the body though.]

I can't deny that.

Today my purse is warm, I think I feel good already.

"…….Um."

"Go ahead and drink it. When you're tired it's good to drink sweet

things.”

24 copper coins. That was my earnings for today.

Considering that I can live through one day by spending only 8 copper coins, I think I can live for 3 days without any problems now.

Thus expenses weren’t a problem for me right now.

Luxury also enriches one’s heart as well.

While thinking of such philosophical things, I wondered if I was actually correct on that point.

“Thank you, very much.”

Holding the wooden cup with both hands, she started to slowly drink.

She must not have realized herself but her body was demanding for sugar as she quickly drank it all.

She sure is drinking with an enjoying expression. While looking at her, I also began to drink my milk.

This milk that was not flavoured like the ones in modern Japan is, honestly speaking, very ordinary.

But I still drank it well. It would be ridiculous to waste some of it. That would be so wasteful.

…….but I did understand why children did not like milk now.

“Then, um,…….can I at least know your name?”

The taste of the milk was getting even worse but the atmosphere seemed to have gotten a bit lighter so I decided to try and talk to her.

Why this newbie adventurer woman was so fixated on monster subjugation quests?

I don’t really want to pry any deeper into her matters but if she has some important reason I could think of helping her a little with that.

She’s a beauty after all. I don’t really need any more of a reason to get to know women.

[The milk is getting on your beard……Pfft.]

Oops. I wiped it with my sleeve.

Nice, Ermenhilde.

[…..Pathetic.]

Leave me alone.

“I’m called Francesca. Francesca Barton.”

“Barton……”

[What, so she really was a noble.]

She has a family name. In this world, normal people don’t have family names.

Only nobles and families with Knight lineage are allowed to have family names in this world.

From her atmosphere, I did think that she might be a noble, but I actually didn’t expect it to be true.

It’s rare for nobles to become adventurers. There are basically nil of such cases.

There are times when a noble might become an adventurer seeking thrill and excitement but that’s usually the second or the third son of the family that cannot succeed the house.

Also, most of them would soon quit after facing the hardships of such a lifestyle.

I have been in parties (T/N: Adventurer party.) with such people and they were usually reluctant to even sleep in a tent outside.

I wondered what were they actually expecting of an adventurer.

And those second and third sons would also, in the end, open up a business and get into administration work.

They basically do not have any money problems after all. So it's only obvious to chose a peaceful method of earning money rather than living the dangerous life of an adventurer.

There are lot of things like management and administration that they would need to learn but it's still better than risking your lives I think.

Thus, it was rare for a Noble to become an adventurer. Especially for a beautiful woman like her.

After knowing that she was a noble, I got worried that she might actually be burdened by some kind of huge debt after getting cheated.

That actually sounds plausible.

In this case, she must be the daughter of the Barton household but…..I've never really heard the name before.

It's probably a lower level noble family.

“I am Renji. I’ve been an adventurer for three years now.”

I should just give my name here.

The name Renji is definitely rare, but it’s not like no one else might have it.

But my surname Yamada is definitely one of a kind. I doubt there’s any other Yamada in this whole world.

Thus, I decided to only use Renji as my name so that I don’t stand out.

“Three years….”

She cutely inclined her head to the side.

Well, I understand what she wants to say.

If one stays an adventurer for three years, he will only be at an intermediate level.

At such a level, it would be very surprising for someone to have easily defeated goblins like I did.

Well it’s actually thanks to the World transfer compensation though. Also my cheat, Ermenhilde.

Without those, I would have really been nothing more than villager C.

“So, why is a noble trying to be an adventurer……”

And, monster subjugation, on top of that.

On being called a noble, Francesca-san’s expression became gloomy.

Could it be, that she doesn’t like being called and treated as a noble?

“I have some circumstances.”(Francesca)

“fuun.”

I gulped down the milk. It’s still tastes bad.

“Are those circumstances the reason why you’re so fixated on monster subjugation?”

“yes.”

Well I don’t really care whether she’s a noble or not, it doesn’t really matter to me.

Rather than that, are those circumstances such that she has to risk her life?

The actions she took today were not risking her own life but abandoning her own life.

I ended up becoming curious of these circumstances of hers.

It won't hurt just listening to her.

Also, I smelled money. She's a noble as well as a newbie adventurer. If I were to help her, I might get some rewards……or something like that.

But that'll depend on the details. I want to avoid anything dangerous.

I took another sip of the milk, and urged her to continue.

If it sounded something really dangerous……well, imight try helping her a little I think.

"Actually, there was a test at the academy….."

"……hm?"

"If I fail at that test I will have to drop out."

What, it was much lighter than what I was expecting.

But I wonder how it relates to her becoming an adventurer.

If it's a test then stick to your desk and study like crazy.

"Should I read the textbook?"

'She was anxious about the practical test and decided to practice against actual monster.'

If she had died for such a reason, her parents wouldn't have been able to even cry. They would have cried in the end though.

"Uu……I'm good at making notes but practical tests are….."(Francesca)

[Wow a typical big-headed person.]

Don't say that.

I hit the medal from above my pocket. Ouch, my thigh actually hurt.

"Well, you do seem bad at physical exercise."

"uu."

She must have been sensitive about it as she moaned and looked downwards.

She actually feels like a small animal.

Also, I could see her cleavage…….well with such a rack it's only normal that she'd be bad at physical exercise.

After understanding this, I felt that it couldn't be helped that Francesca was bad at it.

In fact what do you actually eat to get something like that?

Among my former comrades, there was a woman close to my age.

She was, well…….that. If I were to put it in words, when looking there you would get done in so nobody did so.

By the way, 'done in' here means 'to be killed'.(T/N: it could have also meant as doing it with her but unfortunately that's not the case here.)

I want you to tell her what you eat normally to get something like that.

"Exercise is, well, learning to move your body properly right? You should stop trying to fight monsters for that."

As expected, I could not tell her directly that she was not suited for it.

Well, it might have been fine even if I said that though. It is true after

all.

Now that I have heard her situation, I can't recommend her to subjugate monsters.

If she tries to do it even then, then I'll have no choice but to directly tell her that.

"That.....the physical skill test is actually demon subjugating itself."(Francesca)

"....."

[This girl is going to fail hard.]

I thought the same thing.

Or rather, what kind of school makes its students hunt monsters.

There'll even be casualties. Isn't that bad for a school in various ways?

"What school is this?"

"It is the Magic City Academy, around three days from here by carriage."

It ended up being an extremely big school.

The Magic city was as its name suggested, the whole city was meant as a place for all sorts of magicians to come together to learn and research magic.

Similarly, there are also Tactics City, Commercial Sciences city, Steelworks city etc as well.

The Tactics city is a place where those who can't use magic gather. There they are taught the way to use swords and spears and also battle tactics. People who graduate from there usually end up as Knights or soldiers in the Royal capital. In this city there are more Dojos rather than schools. Basically it's filled with muscle headed idiots.

Most of them barely know how to read and write and can make basic calculations sometimes.

The Commercial Sciences city was, as its name suggests, a city where trade and commerce is prosperous and is also called the biggest city of the human country [Imnesia].

I think its even more lively than the Royal Capital as well.

Also, there are schools here that teach about commerce etc as well. Well it's good that a lot of money flows there, but the city also has its dark parts and I can't really say that the public order is good there.

The Steelworks City is the city of blacksmiths. After inviting elves and dwarves from the country of beastmen [Elfreim], they create magic

enchanted weapons and Mithril weapons there.

The magic weapons or Mithril weapons sold all over [Imnesia] are produced and manufactured only in this city.

Its not very efficient but apparently there are problems like politics, circulation of funds and goods *etc*.

Every big village also have a place to learn but if one wants to learn something seriously, it's normal to go to one of these cities. Though, its usually only rich nobles or absolute geniuses who get their expenses paid by the people of the City that actually go there.

A child of a rural village won't be able to pay the expenses and end up being expelled and returning back.

Then that means that the woman in front of me is definitely a rich noble family's young lady.

The Magic academy……that place's physical test is monster subjugation, is it?

I guess I was mistaken to think that sharing research reports was more magician-like.

"Could you not have made a party with your classmates?"

"Actually that was the plan but everyone seems to avoid me……"

“What the heck?”

[Seriously what?]

I could only sigh while fed up.

I don’t know the reason but those classmates that are making this woman to do something like monster subjugation alone are definitely crazy in their heads.

Either they don’t know the dangers involved or they have some hidden reason behind it.

I don’t know what level of noble is she but still she’s a noble family’s daughter. If a problem occurred, the school will also have to take responsibility.

It sounds troublesome.

“Um, I had a request——“(Francesca)

Ah, as expected.

I knew what she was going to say next.

The problem is whether I should accept or not.

I don’t really have a problem. And, if she’s a noble, I should get a good reward as well.

But the problem is why was this woman made to fight against monsters alone.

It’d be fine if its just me over thinking things but what if something happens?

I really don’t want any trouble. I don’t really mind teaching a noble woman what an adventurer is like.

Even I, if told that I could get closer to such a beauty, would quickly accept it.

But, I really hate trouble.

I also have my special circumstances. I really hate trouble as well as standing out too much.

But I need money. I really want it.

If it’s a reward from an adventurer the, maybe gold coins—-no maybe even silver coins…..(T/N: silver>gold here)

“Could you to please teach me the way of fighting?”

“yeah, sure.”(renji)

While bending forward, she looked at me with sincere eyes.

Right, she was leaning forward.

As she did that, the greenery suppressed by the leather breastplate certainly swayed.

And before I realized, I had already accepted her.

[I won’t get angry so tell where were you looking when you gave your answer? Just say it.]

“Your eyes don’t seem to be lying so I guess…..it’s fine.”(renji)

I averted my gaze.

It’s not like I suddenly felt guilty of anything. I wasn’t really scared of Ermenhilde inside my pocket either.

The scenery outside the window was completely cloudless.

.

.

.

When we returned to the guild, the bear faced adventurer was not here anymore.

Probably, he must have taken some newbies to teach them the way of hunting.

In such a rural village, young ones were precious military resource after all.

They needed to be perfectly trained from the basics so that one day they could also pass this knowledge on to the next generation.

The boy at the reception was looking this way with an amazed face.

“I’m surprised……Renji-san has brought a woman with him.”(boy)

“fu——Even I am able to do things when I want to.”(renji)

[You don’t do anything usually though.]

Shaddup.

I cursed at the medal inside my pocket, which made a tsukkomi with a

fed up voice, within my mind.

But even then, that voice still sounded somewhat happy, probably because I actually did some actual work for once.

That too, a monster subjugating job that I don't do at all no matter how much it asked me for it.

I hope that it doesn't take this as an opportunity to start scolding me to do more jobs like this.

Well, after I get the reward for this I'll be able to live peacefully for some time though.

"But still, Magic City eh? She sure came pretty far to search for a prey."

I'm pretty sure that there are a lot of guilds there. It might have been troublesome to search for the required monster subjugating quest but at least the danger would have been lesser.

But even so, to have spent three days to have come to this far off rural village is quite unthinkable.

According to her, till she came from the Magic city till here, there was no request to defeat the monsters that she needed.

I guess something like that can also happen.

If a student was going to hunt, it would only be a goblin or a kobold. And he would also be escorted by a pro as well.

“Now then, what kind of monster are you looking for?”

I had been requested to teach her the way of fighting but if I don’t know the target I won’t be able to do that after all.

During the times when we were trying to defeat the Demon God, I had fought with most types of monsters so I am a bit aware of their characteristics.

If it’s a monster whose subjugation will appear in a rural village then even I should be able to properly teach her that.

Yes, I was thinking this. With a simple request, I could a great reward.

“It’s an Orc.”

“Pig eh?”

[If it goes well, you’ll be able to get a luxurious food as well.]

Orc.

It wasn’t actually a pig but was a monster that had a nose and fangs like a pig. In the first place, there are no pigs in this world, so the word

pig itself was nonexistent.

As I saw Francesca tilting her head at my weird words, I felt calmed down.

That Orc.

It's height was around 2m. Its special characteristics were its physical strength and stamina. It was pretty tough due to its large body.

It's movements were, as one would expect, dull so as long as one doesn't let down his guard and be careless, I'll be able to manage it……..probably.

I looked at Francesca.

…….Her stamina probably won't last till I kill it.

"Does your test also have a time limit to complete?"

"1 month. I have already used up around 1 week so only around 20 days are left."

"Then we have quite a lot of time."

Goblins and Kobolds appear in the grasslands but Orcs only appear in caves and forests.

Or sometimes they come to human habitations and fields for hunting.

Orcs normally eat anything. Vegetables, meat, even humans. Thus, if it appears in a village, a subjugation request is sent out quickly. And since they are easy to kill, such requests are dealt with quickly.

It's pretty strong but very dull. Its meat is sold at a high price since its really delicious.

The rewards for the request as well as the earnings from selling Orc meat. I could live for almost 10 days easily with such incomes.

Since there are no caves nearby, we'll have to head deep inside the forest or in the worst case, head to a nearby village which is close to a cave.

It's been 1 month since I settled here.

I guess it might not be too bad to move now I think. To have met Francesca must have been a good opportunity.

"Guess I should prepare to go on a journey."

"journey, is it?"

"For the time being, our objective is to search for Orcs."

[This journey sure has a weird objective……..]

I agree.

But that’s very like us.

I lightly laughed with my partner, Ermenhilde.

And our new companion looked at me curiously.

Chapter 4 Hero and the Newbie Adventurer (4)

What are the important things needed on a journey?

When I came to this world, I thought it would have been easy to just walk from one village to another or one town to another. Riding a carriage as it swayed would be a great thing in this different world.

……..That was not a very happy memory.

What's important is food and provisions. That too, things like dried meat or crackers that would last long. Though they aren't very tasty.

Dried meat is pickled with salt so the taste is as you would expect. Not to mention that it is stiff. Very stiff.

I ended up yearning for the tender cooking of the modern world in just a week of staying in the different world.

The crackers are tasteless. They are only meant to fill the stomach.

You could say that I had underestimated living in a fantasy world.

Thinking about how food is available in the modern world as canned, sterilised and perfectly packed, I felt as if the humans in our world were geniuses on par with God.

We had to prepare our own food. It won't suddenly appear out of nowhere.

You could say that we were being too naïve but we really did think like that back then.

"Now then, let's go and buy the things necessary for the journey."

After talking with Miss Francesca about the above things, we decided on doing the preparations together.

Of course I had excluded the things about the different world.

That's because it seems that nobody had taught her anything related to journeying and travelling.

Guess that's normal though. Usually, such things are taught by seniors in the guild or you learn through years of experience.

A newbie adventurer like her doesn't have any person like a senior in the guild and obviously she doesn't have any experience either.

Well in this case I'll be the senior but……

"Even if I say that.."

I only need a few change of clothes and food for a few days. And a

blanket and water, that's all.

Well since I can't use magic, I guess I'll also need a flint and some oil as well.

They also sell things like tents but since its too bulky I have never bought it since I travelled alone.

Whenever the weather worsened, I would simply rest under a rock or the shade of a tree till it cleared out. That helps in saving money after all.

But since a woman would also be travelling with me, I guess I'll need to buy that as well. As expected, even I wouldn't make a woman sleep outdoors. Not to mention, that she's a noble.

"Now that I think about it, if you're a student at the Magic Academy, then you should be able to use magic as well, right?"(renji)

"Ah, yes, somewhat…."

As she said that, Miss Francesca seemed to act a little bashful.

Along with those looks, she really looks cute.

[Oi, stop grinning.]

Oops.

“Then can you create a fire?”

“Yes.”

Then we don’t need a flint.

If she can create a fire with magic, then we’ll be fine as long as find some dry wood near the place we camp.

Magicians are really convenient during travels.

They can create fire when sleeping outside and can also create clean water as well.

Magic is really convenient. You could even call it an all-purpose thing.

The magicians in this world use magic by imagining a phenomenon within their minds.

Unlike games, chanting isn’t really needed usually. But to create a fireball and to shoot a fireball are two different things. That’s where the most difficult part of imagining comes. This what the great magician of this world and that almost-Chuunibyou magician said to me.

To create a fireball, all you needed to do was to imagine a fireball above your palm. Rest, you can simply depend on using you magical energy needed to create it.

But to shoot out the fireball, you had to first imagine the fireball and then also imagine its trajectory perfectly as well.

The higher the level of magic used, the more complex it is to perfectly imagine the details.

Also, the magical energy used is also important.

The magicians need to imagine a lot of things at the same time apparently.

To help this, chants are used.

By speaking the spell words, the imagination becomes deeper and more clear and distinct.

The higher the level of concentration, the more detailed the imagination is, the better and stronger the magic will be activated.

That is how the magic in this world works.

Actually, there are a lot of complicated formulas behind it as well but my comrades were all God-slaying cheat holders after all.

They simply ignored all that and released super strong magic like it was normal.

“If you can use magic, then you should been able to take on atleast some goblins after gaining some experience I think.”

“uu…….i’m sorry.”

“Uh, no, you don’t really have to apologise there.”

Magic is really convenient and powerful.

She had said that her speciality was taking notes then not just fireball, she should be able to use ice blade or wind blade as well. Its power is incomparable to the strike of a normal sword.

The fireball could burn their bodies, ice blade could pierce through skin and leather armour easily. And the wind blade could slash at the opponent without being visible.

But there are times when a magician becomes useless in an actual battle.

That’s because when clashing swords with an enemy in front them, they don’t have the composure to think about anything else.

When someone is coming at you to take away your life, you can’t really think of an image of a fireball inside your head after all.

That’s why it is normal for rushing towards magicians to enter into close

combat against magicians.

Well, there are first class magicians that can keep on using magic even when in close combat as well though.

But it'd be too harsh too expect that from a newbie adventurer like her.

"All that's left is the weapon, eh?"

She had a new short sword but I had nothing.

I did have the God-slaying cheat Ermenhilde but that's not something I can calmly show off to others.

The title of 'Hero' was too troublesome which is why I had gone off on a journey alone. I have no intention to tell that I'm a hero now.

As I thought about what to buy, I sighed.

If it was going to turn out like this, I shouldn't have sold that worn-out sword that I got from those goblins.

While I sent Miss Francesca to go buy some clothes and underwear for herself, I went around to choose a weapon for myself.

[This is going to hurt your purse hard.]

Seriously.

I looked towards the brand new long sword and battle axe leaning against the wall.

Each and every one of them was costly. At an average, each costed about dozens of copper coins. The even costlier ones costed few gold coins.

The cheapest one was an iron knife. The cost was 8 copper coins.

Rather than a knife for fighting, it was more like a tool for housework.

I decided to buy that one in a single glance.

Honestly speaking, I didn't really need any weapons from such shops. After all I already have a partner weapon to which I could entrust my life with, Ermenhilde.

But I was not going say that out loud.

If I did, this medal of mine would start getting cocky after all.

I had ended up saying something like that many a times back then.....my comrades had started to become suspicious of me.

I had been shouted at that I was raising a death flag before our fight

with the Demon God.

I think I had been influenced by my comrades too much.

How nostalgic, really. I wonder if those guys are still doing well?

As I gave another sigh, and picked up one of those knives.

Suddenly, my gaze went towards the sword that I had sold after coming to this village.

It was a famous sword given to me by the king of [Imnesia].

Its blade was made of mithril and had been forged by a dwarf. The decorations had been done by an elf and been granted the divine protection of the spirits of the earth and forests.

On the amethyst embedded on the handle, the emblem of [Imnesia] would appear when you pour magical energy inside it. There were only 13 of these swords in this world.

Such a famous sword would be priceless.

It was not something that could be sold at its true cost in such a rural village.

Probably, it would be sold at a proper cost when the peddler comes to

the village next time.

If they knew that I had sold such a famous sword in such a rural village, I would probably be imprisoned for lese majeste.

This might be a little late but I ended up sweating a little when I thought that.

“It’s an amazing sword……you can tell just by looking that it’s a top class item.”

“I know.”

Francesca called towards me as she saw that sword.

She must have bought the clothing I had told her to, she was holding a luggage wrapped in cloth with her.

In this world, paper was very valuable. The have a method to make paper but it is not very stable.

Since there are no machines and it is made through hand, the production can’t keep up.

That’s why, during shopping if someone buys a small thing, he’s given that as it is. And if the thing bought is larger, it is given by wrapping it a neat piece of cloth.

“It’s a rare sword. Any swordsman would want that.”(renji)

“It seems to have been made from mithril, must be the work of a dwarf…….I can also sense magic. I wonder if it was refined by an elf?”(fran)

“Well…… I haven’t really heard of a method used by elves that could refine Mithril.”

I bragged a little.

“If no price has been set that means that they must not want to sell it.”

After all it was made by an elf and a dwarf together who are famous for always being on bad terms.

If they knew the story behind its creation, there was no way a price could be set for it.

I smiled wryly as Miss Francesca talked about it with gleaming eyes.

She must be pretty confident about her knowledge if she could talk about mithril and other such materials.

—-I guess it was true that she was good at taking notes at class.

I guess I should try talking to her about such topics later.

While thinking about things as if they were unrelated to me, I brought the iron knife to the counter.

[What, do you still have some attachments with that sword?]

“Well, it’s the same for me whether it’s a mithril sword or an iron knife.”(renji)

“I don’t think that’s true. Mithril is very strong against ghosts and undead. To put it at the same level of iron is….”(fran)

Francesca reacted to the words I spoke to Ermenhilde.

Within my pocket, Ermenhilde started snickering towards this mismatched conversation.

“That’s true. I guess its not comparable with iron.”(renji)

But both of them were simple weapon. They could never replace my partner Ermenhilde.

I put the iron knife along with the tent and other things on the counter and brought out 20 copper coins.

This really is going to hurt my purse.

The shopkeeper who knew of my financial condition, gave a wry smile and gave me some extra dried meat for free.

[I wonder what kind of Hero takes donations from villagers.]

“Thank you very much.”

I heard a somewhat philosophical voice coming from inside my pocket.

Why does it want me to be a hero so much? I really don’t want to have a title like a Hero.

As I sighed, the shopkeeper misunderstood it as getting down due to my huge expenses and further added some free crackers as well.

My eyes were now already nailed on the coins being taken by the shopkeeper rather than on the mithril sword.

I felt like I heard a sigh that only I could hear but I ignored it.

For a human to keep on living, money is more important than weapons.

While carrying quite a bit of luggage under my arms, I gave another sigh.

I really should have worked a bit harder to raise money I think.

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As I left the store, we first moved towards the inn to drop our luggage. As expected, it would be troublesome to carry it all the time with me. And then we decided to take a break there as well.

I didn’t ask for milk but asked for only water that was free. Any more expenses would have an effect on my meal tonight.

I feel sorry for Miss Francesca but I had to ask her to pay for her own expenses.

[.....Undependable, as usual.]

Shaddup.

While being disappointed from that voice that seemed to be enjoying this, I drank water.

It’s lukewarm.

I guess it might be too much to demand for cold water from a inn of a rural village.

In the royal capital or any other slightly big towns, a magician would make the ice but there's no way a magician would live in a village like this.

Well, there's one in front of me but she's not a worker of the inn.

"Tomorrow, we'll leave the village."(renji)

"Yes."(fran)

That was the last confirmation.

I had explained everything else before we went shopping.

After leaving this village, we'll walk towards the neighbouring village.

We won't use a carriage to increase her physical endurance and stamina as well as to help her gain experience in travelling.

After hunting down the Orc she might go back to her school but for now she's an adventurer.

Then, during this time, I'm thinking of training her like a normal adventurer as well.

That should increase my reward and the person herself agrees with it.

“Then I’ll be troubling you from here onwards.”(fran)

Saying that, she bowed her head.

I would in fact be troubled if we were to move by carriages so I’m actually thankful.

Obviously, by trouble I mean financial ones.

Carriages are only used by people who have surplus money. Also those who want to keep themselves perfectly safe during the journey.

Merchants and dealers are usually the ones who use them. They put up escort missions in the guild quite a lot as well so there are times when I had also escorted them.

They are pretty rich and also prepare meals during the trip so it’s not really bad.

Well, sometimes there are also those merchants who act too-familiar and those who deal with slaves as well though.

“Don’t worry. You lack stamina so it’s perfect for it.”(renji)

“uu.”

I ended up giving a wry smile as she was at a loss for words.

In the first place, it's rare for a student to go on a journey. Since they're always studying while sitting on their desks, its normal that they don't have any stamina.

While thinking of such things, I looked outside from the window.

I saw a boy who looked like an orphan.

Sitting on the road, he seemed to be in a daze waiting for someone to give him money or food.

There are a lot of orphans in this world.

Before the Demon God had been defeated, the monsters had been attacking the villages, burning houses and killing the people constantly.

Due to that, even after a year has passed, there are still a lot of orphans like that.

They have orphanages set up as well, but the number isn't sufficient enough.

Quite a lot of my comrades seem to be working to change the situation but it still hasn't been planned out perfectly yet it seems.

In the first place, the concept of welfare programmes itself didn't exist here, there's no way they could make visible changes in just one year.

Even if it's one of the heroes that saved the world that is calling for it.

The ones who have the money are the nobles. To make them understand, we aren't eloquent enough.

Even the God slaying cheat holding heroes are also humans in that case.

Well, there is a guy who's making a lot of money by using such a cheat and trying to change the world as well though.

For example chess, or shogi.

This world, that had forgotten ways to enjoy due to the threat of monsters, have been completely immersed in this game.

As a means for amusement, one set of each game is being sold for money.

I think it's pretty well done.

I wonder if I lived more admirably, will my life be a bit more easier?

I think that might be true.

I wonder if I’m just incapable of such things or is it just because of everyone else’s cheat skill.

Well, it’s probably the former I think.

While thinking that, I was given a gold coin.

“It’s the advance for the reward.”(fran)

“n, thanks.”(renji)

One gold coin. It basically equals a 100 copper coins. By the way, 100 gold coins = 1 silver coin.

I don’t think I remember even seeing a silver coin in the past one year. In the first place, nobody needs that big of an amount to live on normally everyday.

I think it’s been a long time since I saw a gold coin as well.

By the way, I’m aware that there are quite a lot of gold coins stuffed inside her purse.

I just ended up seeing it accidently while we were shopping that’s all. I didn’t have any ill intentions at all.

I think it can’t be helped that I ended up seeing that but as expected of a noble.

She’s so careless and defenceless, I feel like she’ll get robbed sooner or later.

Also, it might be a bit late to say this but, I think it would have been much better if I had gotten this before we started shopping.

I would have been able to make a bit more better preparations for the journey.

Well, we’ll still need to live on dried meat though.

I really want to somehow change that fact.

I have been thinking about it all the time after coming to this world but someone like me who can’t even cook can’t really do anything about it.

[Haah.]

I wonder if that sigh was towards the defenceless Francesca or towards the unworthy actions of the hero that was looking inside other people’s purses. Or maybe it’s uselessly thinking about something stupid.

……..in any case, it must be something related to me.

“From tomorrow we’re going on a walking journey. Let’s take a proper rest today.”(renji)

“Yes. Please take care of me from here onwards, Renji-san.”(fran)

As she asked with such a wide smile, even I started feeling happy about this.

This must also be some kind of talent.

[You’re making an undisciplined face again, how deplorable.]

“All men are like that.”(renji)

We’re weak towards smiles made by beauties. It really can’t be helped.

“What are you going to do about lodging?”(renji)

“I have rented a room at this inn as well.”(fran)

As she said that, I looked towards the landlady as she gave a smile.

Well, she’s also running the inn here as well. It must be pretty convenient.

“…….I’m not really a morning person you see…..”(fran)

Thought so.

It really is convenient.

It seems this is gonna be a fun journey.

[Your face, face.]

Oh shaddup.

Chapter 5 Hero's Journey

Yamada Renji is a God-Slayer. But, he thinks he is not a hero. Only he thinks that though.

Receiving the blessings of the goddess, and getting the god-slaying cheat power, he is one of the 13 people who saved the world.

They refer to their powers as a 'cheat' but for the people of this world, it is the power of the gift granted to them by the goddess.

The brave boy received the power to [remain undefeated]. As long as he himself did not accept his own loss, he would attain the power to overturn any situation. Whether it be a game, quarrel, war, or a battle to the death. Even if the opponent was someone many levels above him, as long as his will didn't accept defeat, the world itself would support him. This super ability was that boy's cheat.

The girl known as the Grand Magus received [God-like magical power]. That magical energy could bring down lightning, overturn the earth and crush everything in her surroundings. A power that could make a natural disaster into a reality through imagination; her power could send countless monsters to oblivion. Even if the opponent was a dragon or a giant, her magic could destroy them as well. Truly, her magic was God-like.

Another girl wished for a power to make contracts with the monsters. There was a limit that only 3 monsters would follow her commands but controlling a flying dragon, an immortal knight and a prank loving fairy, her presence was befitting of that of a god-slaying hero.

Another girl was a [Saint] that could heal any and all injuries.

One was a chunnibyo wannabe magician that possessed the Evil Eye in his left eye that could see future.

One was the world's greatest cook.

Etc.

They truly were very unique comrades.

The journey was painful and difficult.

But, it was still fun as well.

There were a lot of heart breaking memories but not all the memories were like that.

The hero Yamada Renji had also wished for a cheat. To defeat the Demon God, to return back to their world, to live.

And what he had received was the talking medal that was a Godslaying weapon and a slightly enhanced physical ability.

Why was it a talking medal? Why had the goddess granted a will to a weapon?

The goddess [Astraera].

A weapon did not require a will of its own. Isn't that something obvious?

If a weapon had a will——it's obvious that you'll get attached to it.

Taking, laughing together, struggling together, supporting each other, sharing our pains and joys, travelling together and saving each other.

That's why, the hero Yamada Renji thought of finding a different lifestyle for his partner Ermenhilde other than that of living as a weapon. He ended up thinking about such things.

The 'weapon' Ermenhilde changed to his 'partner' Ermenhilde. But still, the Godslaying weapon tried to remain as the 'weapon' Ermenhhilde.

Just how much was it distressed by that, Yamada Renji didn't know.

He didn't know how much this choice had hurt the 'weapon' Ermenhilde and had cornered it.

And he didn't realize how much was it all according to that ill-natured woman, goddess Astraera's plans.

But the end conclusion was even beyond the goddess' expectations.

The ‘weapon’ Ermenhilde chose him, the hero, and went on a journey.

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As I opened my eyes, it was already morning.

[…….This is rare. You woke up without my help for once.]

“You’re supposed to greet first. Good Morning Ermenhilde.”

yawn As I yawned, a sigh came from beside me.

[Those words, I return back to you.]

“Well, that’s true as well.”

Kakaka, it laughed. [T/N: Shinobu from monogatari series laughs like this as well if you’re wondering.]

I’m not really the type to greet someone properly either after all.

Especially when I wake up after drinking a lot the last night.

“I saw a nostalgic dream.”

[Did you dream of the other world again?]

As I told about my dream while I changed my clothes, Ermenhilde asked thus.

After coming to this world, we used to dream about our original world a lot.

We had been enjoying this new world, but somewhere deep inside, everyone missed their own world.

In the first place, you don’t get to experience something like being summoned to a different world a lot of times after all.

Even after receiving my partner Ermenhilde, I dreamt a lot about my original world.

Though, it was just a mere dream.

After waking up, I’ll be back to this different world.

After about half a year had passed, I stopped dreaming about that world as well.

The younger ones in our group saw them for almost a year though. Sometimes they even cried in their sleep.

I was an adult. I couldn't cry when young ones were crying in front of me after all.

Anyway, leaving that aside.

"It was bit more nostalgic than that."

Somehow, I was unable to tell Ermenhilde that I had dreamt about it.

The Goddess [Astraera].

She's the existence that gave us our cheat powers and the goddess that is worshipped by the humans.

The beastmen worshipped a god known as the Spirit God and the demons worshipped the Demon God.

She was one of the three pillars that is said to have created the world.

I have met her but I don't know how she looks like actually.

For some reason, my memories of that part seem to be hazy. I can't remember it back.

But I expect that she was extremely beautiful considering that she was a goddess.

I really want to talk with her once.

[So?]

“That’s it.”

[…..I see.]

While hearing Ermenhilde’s usual fed up voice, I washed my face and shaved my beard.

Some parts are not shaved properly. Yup, once again I’m perfectly looking like a Villager C.

“Perfect.”

[You still haven’t shaved properly.]

“Isn’t that just fine?”

While talking about such stupid things, I put Ermenhilde back inside my pocket.

I put on the worn out overcoat, fixed my knife on my belt and carried the luggage.

……I fell like I look more like a merchant than an adventurer but, well whatever.

Next time, maybe I should buy some cheap armour as well. It’s more adventurer-like.

It might be a bit too dangerous to face off against an Orc in just a tunic after all.

Well it’ll be fine as long as I don’t get hit.

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After meeting up with Miss Francesca, we left the village after finishing our breakfast.

By the time I finished my partings with the Landlady and the guys from the guild, the sun had already reached high in the sky.

I’m feeling slightly excited as well.

As expected, an adventure feels great no matter how old you are.

Even if it was in a different world with who knows what unknown dangers. No, maybe that's why I'm a bit more excited than normal.

The distance wasn't very large but it wasn't exactly small either.

It'll take about a day to go to the neighbouring village but since I had a newbie with us as well, it might take slightly longer.

Even then we still have quite a lot of surplus time though.

"Should I carry some luggage for you?"

"No, I'll be fine."

I had a bit more luggage than Miss Francesca. As expected, the tent made the luggage bulkier. If I were to leave that, my luggage was definitely less than hers.

It seems that fact that women paid special mind to what and how much they needed to wear was the same even in this world.

Men are usually fine as long as they have clothes for just a few days.

"Haaa……this'll be the first time I'll be travelling on foot."

It seems she was also slightly excited considering how her voice sounded to me.

As I smiled wryly towards her, she hung her head embarrassed.

“Well, it’ll be a good experience for you.”(renji)

To connect villages to each other, a highway made of white stones had been made.

It was an absolutely normal white stone, but for some reason it emphasized that this was ‘the path for humans’ and thus monsters tended not to attack here.

It was not a certain fact but it was much safer than not walking on the highway.

To monsters, humans were simply prey but for humans, monsters were meant to be immediately subjugated.

It’ll be a battle to death every time these two existences would meet each other.

If they don’t want to risk their lives, the monsters will not come near the ‘path for humans’. As long as they aren’t cornered too far though.

“Well, we’ll be safe more or less as long as we are on the highway so

let's take it easy."(renji)

"Yes."(fran)

We walked down the highway together.

Since I was the taller one, her hair gently danced near my face occasionally.

I smelled something really nice.

There's no way the bath in a rural village would have something like a shampoo or soap, so this must be the sweet smell unique to only women. As my thoughts started to tilt towards the slightly perverted side,

[….Tch.]

It was not a voice of warning or objection but the sound of clicking tongue.

I took one step away from Miss Francesca silently.

It was not like I would really do something but somehow I started feeling guilty.

So I shifted my consciousness from the beauty Miss Francesca towards the highway.

Not a single stone was too round or sharp. Though not exactly perfect, the highway had been built very neatly and uniformly.

Even carriages and horses could easily travel on this.

Thus, transportation was much smoother and transactions between villages would be better.

It was easy to walk for long times on this as well.

After walking for some while, I realized that miss Francesca was starting to fall back a little.

As I looked back, her breathing had already become disordered.

She was also sweating as her long pretty hair was sticking to her forehead. As I looked above, the sun was shining brightly overhead.

This world also has proper 4 seasons. 1 year was of 360 days. There were 9 months, every month consisting of 40 days.

It was slightly different from our original world but the difference wasn't that big.

They were called simply like the [1st month], [3rd month] etc and were very easy to remember as well.

Currently, it was the [6th month]. In terms of Japan, it would be the time where summer had ended and autumn had begun.

The nights were slightly cold but during the day, it was still hot. It was such a season.

While thinking of such things, I waited for Francesca to catch up to me.

[This is gonna be hard going.]

“We were the same when we came to this world as well, I think.”

[That’s also true I guess.]

I brought Ermenhilde out who was snickering inside my pocket.

I flicked it with my thumb. The god slaying weapon medal rotated in mid air as it shined from the sunlight.

While wasting time like that, I waited for the newbie adventurer Miss Francesca.

I really like carefree journeys like this.

It makes me realize that I’m still in a different world.

When I’m enjoying the journey I really think about it from my heart.

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The campfire made snapping sounds as it flickered.

After walking this whole day, I understood one thing.

“uu……”

Miss Francesca’s stamina was worse than I thought.

She was currently massaging her legs after rolling up her trousers that she had bought for travelling use.

She had also removed her breastplate as well.

Thus, her figure as she leaned forward to massage her legs was a pretty tempting sight for any man.

Every time she massaged her legs, they would move and sway and then sway again.

Honestly, its not something she should do with a man in front of her.

Though, it is a great perquisite for me.

Other than her bountiful chest, her slender yet fleshy legs were also very favourable to watch.

[Oi, hentai.]

Those words are definitely not something you should say to your partner you know.

As my face cramped due to the violence hidden in those words, I shifted my gaze from her legs towards the forest.

“We will arrive to the next village by tomorrow.”

While adding some dried branches to the fire, I spoke.

The original plan was to reach there by tomorrow early morning but considering our pace today, it’ll be around afternoon by the time we reach there.

But it’s not like we’re really in a hurry either so I guess it won’t hurt to take this leisurely.

I can say it from my experience that nothing good comes out of making too much haste.

“Sorry. I was being too slow….”(fran)

“Don’t worry about it. Everyone’s like that at first.”

Even we had almost felt like dying just from muscular pain and fatigue.

It’s something common with every new adventurer.

I’m really envious of those heroes whose HP won’t fall no matter how much they walked. Not to mention they get fully restored just by staying a night at an inn.

“Even Renji-san was like this?”(fran)

“I was about to die from getting cramps and muscular pains.”

On Miss Francesca’s question, I said the same thing I was thinking just now instantly.

It’s actually really dangerous to get muscular pains during a journey.

If one were to get attacked by monsters, he wouldn’t be able to fight at his max strength.

To struggle for your life as you fight, I don't even want to think about it.

Muscular pains are really dangerous. Your feet would get cramped if you try too hard as well.

"Is this your first time sleeping outside.....I guess not."

She did say she had been travelling on a carriage.

There would be times when you have to rest in the middle of the road even when travelling with carriages. In such cases, one would either sleep inside the carriage itself, or put up some tents separately.

Considering her, I think she must have slept inside the carriage.

While thinking such things, I stood up.

"We'll be walking tomorrow as well so do your best to relieve your fatigue."

Basically, continue with your massage.

Well, I should at least set up the tent and stuff in the time being.

I wouldn't mind massaging her either but, in that case, I'm perfectly aware of what would happen to my partner Ermenhilde's affection points.

In the first place, I am suspicious whether any affection points actually exist though.

[I think we were supposed to train her in fighting monsters as well though?]

“If we were lucky to actually meet some, then yes.”

Bringing out the tent from inside the luggage, I started the preparations.

Since I’ll be keeping watch during the night, it was a small tent for one person use.

Well, just having a roof above you when sleeping outside gives a great amount of peace.

Though, I have already become bold enough to not really care about such things anymore.

In fact, when I had just come to this world, I wasn’t able to sleep even with a tent though.

I really was so sensitive and delicate back then. In many ways.

Let’s just say that I have matured up. Yup.

Chapter 6 The God Slayer and Orc

By the time we reached the next village, the sun had already begun to set. I think we took even more time than I had originally thought.

By the original plan, we were supposed to reach here by today morning but it's almost night already.

Miss Francesca beside me looked towards me with an apologetic face.

She isn't saying anything probably because she knows it was her fault that we're late. She might be blaming herself more than normal actually.

Even though we men would be unable to say anything if she just looked at me with sad upturned eyes.

Well, I wasn't really going to scold her in the first place.

While thinking such things, I looked towards the village.

The population is probably only 50 people. There are around 10 wooden houses that can be seen.

Since the sun was setting, the men seemed to be returning back from the fields and were glancing towards us travellers.

It sure looks like a calm and peaceful village. It really has an atmosphere that calms you down.

As we moved towards the inn, we asked for two rooms. The receptionist asked to confirm whether I really wanted 2 rooms but I decided to ignore that.

“Please prepare two rooms and meals for tonight and tomorrow morning as well.”(renji)

Saying that, I placed one gold coin on the counter.

He seemed surprised since a rural village inn like this one might not see gold coins too often but he soon brought out the copper coin change.

Normally I would negotiate here but since Miss Francesca is also here now, I’m wondering what to do.

Thinking for a moment, I lost the chance to negotiate in that moment.

[That’s because you try to act cool in front of women. If you are going to sigh in grief now, it would have been better to have just bargained as usual.]

As you say.

I gave a sigh and the innkeeper also gave a wry smile towards me.

Well, considering that he opened an inn in such a remote village, he'll try to earn as much as possible in such situations.

I decided to give up and hope for good food.

'This is why you're always out of money.' I felt I heard a voice like that from somewhere.

For the time being, let's just smack that medal inside my pocket a bit.

"We'll rest the whole day tomorrow so be sure to rest properly."(renji)

"……is that fine?"(fran)

Unlike before, she looked at me with upturned eyes and a happy expression and my cheeks loosened a bit. If I had a daughter, it'll probably be like this.

[You sound like a deviant.]

Did you not have anything better to say?

I'll really get hurt you know?

As my cheeks cramped, she looked towards me while raising her head confused.

“n, yeah, with those legs, your pace would fall after all.”(Renji)

“Sorry.”(fran)

“No need to apologise. In fact, I think it’s amazing that you didn’t say you want to return.”(renji)

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This inn had two floors. The first floor was the diner and the second floor had the private rooms.

There were no things like keys and the rooms had an internal lock only so we needed to take care of our own valuables.

Well magicians had it easy since they could conveniently imagine a key and a lock.

“Umm.”(fran)

While I was thinking such things and was about to go and leave the luggage on the second floor, I was called for.

“Thank you very much.”(fran)

“Like I said, no need to worry. Journey’s are meant to be enjoyed.”(renji)

At least for me, journeys are such things.

Without any objective, roaming around this world leisurely, it broadened my perspective.

In that sense, I’m lucky that I met this girl who gave me a temporary objective for a journey.

Not to mention that I’ll get a reward for completing that objective as well.

The request was the subjugation of an Orc. Considering our pace, there’s still a long way to go.

We have a lot of time, and there’s no need to hurry either. I, for once, am really thinking of fully enjoy this journey.

Bringing out the medal Ermenhilde from my pocket, I flicked it with my finger.

With a dry sound, it twirled and rotated and I caught it with my right hand.

“I like going on journeys. That’s why, I am in fact thankful towards Miss Francesca for coming to me with this request.”(renji)

[For someone who likes journeying, I feel that you were lazing around in that village for way too long though.]

I really like journeying but I also like Sake and lazing around as well.

While giving such an excuse within my mind, I began climbing the stairs.

We had slept outside for only one night but as expected, one doesn't recover as much while sleeping outside.

After visiting the bar later, I should quickly go to sleep I think.

"Well, Miss Francesca should go by her own pace. I'll match myself according to that."(renji)

"……Yes."(fran)

Maybe she was thinking of something, her response was a little late.

But, if she had something to say she'd probably do so. Thinking that, I headed towards the room.

She doesn't complain, doesn't act on her own, and listens to what I say.

Frankly, there's nothing more I need in a companion.

After gaining some experience in killing monsters, she should be able to become a good adventurer.

Since she's a student of the Magic Academy, she'd probably become a scholar or something like that in the future though.

But that's not something I need to care about.

To help her achieve the objective of successfully killing a monster. That's my objective.

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The village's bar was one size smaller than the bar in the previous village.

Well, this village barely has any travellers. I should be glad that they have a bar at all.

While thinking such things, I sat by the counter.

There were a few men inside the bar.

The gazes of the bartender and the men turned towards me.

Outsiders must be really rare here. While ignoring the gazes, I put three copper coins on the counter.

Normally, I should have first gone to the guild to confirm the request but since we're resting tomorrow, might as well leave that for tomorrow as well.

[That doesn't mean that the first place you have to come is the bar you know?……]

I ended up giving a wry smile on the voice of my partner Ermenhilde.

It's the same as always, it can't be helped. Just give up.

"Give me something light."(renji)

Without looking at the menu, I randomly ordered.

Normally I can drink all, whether it be wine, ale or whisky so I'm good with almost everything.

……..though I become unable to even move the next day if I drink a too strong one in high quantity.

Well, alcohol worth 3 copper coins won't be enough to get me that

drunk I think.

Sometimes, the bartender would bring out a strong one intentionally to harass me but, that also feels nice in its own way.

It's what you could call the true pleasures of journeying.

"Are you a traveller?"

The bartender, who brought out my alcohol in a wooden cup, asked me so.

As a snack, he also brought out some fresh vegetables and some kind of grilled meat together with the drinks.

Probably its orc meat or some other one from the fields.

Orc meat can be obtained cheaply in the market. It is high in nutritional value so unlike goblin meat, orc meat can be turned into money.

The elementary and intermediate level adventurers hunt them in groups so there's no lack of such meat in the market.

With just some slight seasoning, it's delicious to be eaten after grilled.

Some people tend to not eat it saying that its monster meat but I don't really mind that.

I did mind it long back ago though.

……..Humans will always grow. If one were to be so picky in such things, he won’t be able to go on journeys.

While thinking about Orc meat, I took the plate which had the salad and the meat.

I did have dinner with Miss Francesca but alcohol needs snacks to go along with it. Yup. (T/N: True Dat XD)

Miss Francesca was now already asleep back at the inn, probably because she was too tired.

Tomorrow she’ll be having muscular pains, definitely. It should heal by the day after tomorrow.

“Yeah, we came today. We’ll leave by the day after tomorrow.”(renji)

Answering that to the bartender, I took the cup.

By the smell, I think its Apple Ale.

It really has a nice smell. It seems coming to this village was a good decision.

As I took one sip, the perfect level of bitterness and a refreshing smell spread inside my mouth.

“Are you specialised in killing monsters?”(bartender)

“Does it look that way?”(Renji)

I answered his question with another question.

The bartender’s expression became sharp for a second as if assessing me, then quickly turned to a gentle smile.

“Not at all.”(bartender)

“You have good eyes.”(renji)

I shrugged my shoulders.

It’s not that I can’t fight even weak monsters but I can brag that I’m good at staying out of too much trouble at least.

Well, I doubt there’d be any problematic monsters near such a rural village anyway.

[No no, you’re supposed to deny his assessment there…….]

I refuse. Don’t want any unnecessary trouble.

I don’t want to deal with any danger either.

Well, even though I say that, I am still going to subjugate an Orc. Even I think that I’m being painfully contradictory.

While listening to Ermenhilde’s sad voice, I took another sip of the apple ale.

“Did something happen?”(renji)

“Nowadays, Orcs seem to be gathering inside the nearby forest it seems.”(bartender)

“…….fuun.”

It seems, our journey might end sooner than I expected.

Thinking that, I drained my apple ale.

“Tell me more, in detail.”(renji)

Saying that, I gave him the cup.

“Recently, Orcs seem to have settled down in the forest. And have been damaging the fields as well.”

“Well, does sound like what an Orc would do.”

As he refilled my Ale, I answered to the bartender’s words.

An Orcs eating habits are famous and the first thing that comes under damage is the fields of a village.

If the Orcs were met with resistance there, they’d go back to their dwellings and live inside the forests only but I doubt such a village would have any warrior that could face an Orc in battle.

And it doesn’t look like many Adventurers stop by here.

Probably only some travellers and peddlers would occasionally make a stop here.

Even if they send a damage report to the capital, god knows how long it’ll take for a knight squad to arrive here.

Although helping and aiding even such rural villages was also a part of the job of the knight squads but it usually takes months before they’d be able to move out here.

The number of knights isn’t very big either and not to mention there is a lack of funds.

To do anything, it costs money. It’s one thing that was same in our previous world as well.

Though there are knights who move even without money but they usually end up hated by their superiors even if they get the love of the citizens.

Basically, there's still a long time before knights begin to move.

[Our luck is being surprisingly good for some reason.]

"It's because we act as good people every day."(renji)

Taking the cup from him, I gulped down half at once.

"How much can you pay?"(renji)

"You don't really seem very strong to take a job like this. By looks at least."(bartender)

Oh shaddup.

[That's why I said to shave properly.]

Is it just me or are your complaints really getting more and more like as if you're my mother?

I really want to think that I'm just imagining this.

“I have a magician comrade.”(renji)

“That young girl is a magician?”

The bartender’s face became a bit surprised.

As expected of a small village, the info about us soon travels fast to everyone.

It seems they already know that I and Miss Francesca are working in a party.

Well, it’s not really surprising though.

Villagers in a rural village are all friendly with each other. Info like this gets spread around really fast.

“She’s a student at the Magic Academy. She’s apparently top of her class.”(renji)

“Hou, that’s pretty amazing.”

It seems they he knew about the magic academy so he seems to realize that the top of the class is a trustable title.

Of course, it’s a complete lie though.

I think it's fine to lie that much. Probably. It might even turn out to be true.

[You really get carried away with the flow and lie very normally sometimes, you know.....]

"So, how about it? Did that increase your trust in us?"(renji)

Ignoring those words, I talked with the bartender.

I told myself inside my heart that it was a necessary lie to gain more info.

Adults really are too dirty.

"I guess so. It's not like we'd lose anything either so I might as well make a request."(bartender)

"That really is cruel way of putting it."(renji)

As I laughed, another Apple ale was prepared for me.

Since he gave it to me even though I didn't ask for it, it seems it's his treat to me.

"There seem to be three Orcs inside the forest."(bartender)

“3 eh?”(renji)

That’s quite a lot, I thought so inside my mind.

Well, since they are very slow, there are many ways to deal with them.

We can separate them, or burn them with Miss Francesca’s magic from long range as well.

Even if we mess up, we could quickly run away and try again later as well.

I thought up various plans inside my head.

“Also, one of them is excessively strong. The young ones of the village were unable to even touch it.”(bartender)

“Strong?”(renji)

“Yeah, it’s a black Orc apparently.”

Black?

I thought of the High Orcs but they aren’t the type that appear in a place like this.

They usually live only on the continent of demons.

They don’t live on the Imnesia continent. In the first place, a monster like that would have obliterated a village like this in the very first attack.

But then, what else could it be?

A black Orc. Is it a new mutated species? Or is it simply a normal Orc that just happened to be black in colour?

“Did you think of something?”(bartender)

“Now then, for the time being, I’m considering whether to take up the request or not.”(renji)

If it’s a simple Orc then there’s no problem.

Even with three of them, worst case scenario, we’ll simply have to run away.

I am perfectly aware of its slow speed.

But, that black Orc.

It’s bothering me a bit.

“For the time being, we’ll go and check up on the forest the day after tomorrow. We’ll decide after that whether to accept the request or

not.”(renji)

“Yes, that would be fine.”

Although he talked but it didn’t seem like he was expecting much of us.

But that’s pretty normal. After all we’re just adventurers passing through. It’d be weird if they were expecting too much of us.

And not to mention, that I look no better than a normal villager.

He wouldn’t think that I could take on a strong Orc.

I’m just a humble God Slaying traveller from a different world after all.

[Here you’re supposed to use me, the god slaying weapon, upfront and deal with it—]

“Well, I’ll work just hard enough to not die.”(renji)

In the first place, it bothers me that the village is still safe even though such a strong Orc is living nearby.

If it really was that strong, rather than attack just the fields, it could have simply attacked the village directly and taken whatever it wanted.

Although I want to avoid fighting an unknown enemy, since our

objective is also to defeat Orcs, I'll have to look for them.

Since those Orcs are attacking the village means that I can also expect a reward as well.

Combining it with the reward I'll get from Miss Francesca, I should be able to earn quite a sum this time.

With that much, I won't have to be worried about my travel expenses for some time as well.

After all's said and done, travelling around does require money as well.

Since I had been lazing around for the whole past month, I'm in need of money all the more.

Also, if I don't get a bit serious now, I'll probably be scolded by my partner, Ermenhilde as well.

[fumu—-it seems like I'll finally have an opponent worth fighting against.]

The God slaying weapon, Ermenhilde said that with a delighted voice.

But, I'll be using only the iron knife though.

.....It really sounds too impossible, I really think so.

Well, I could even try and put some traps in the forest.

For that, I'll have to decide while scouting the forest.

"We'll run away if we feel like we can't win so don't resent us for that, alright?"(renji)

"Don't worry. The reward will be given only if you succeed after all."(bartender)

"Well that's good to hear."(renji)

That means, we'll have to kill those Orcs if we want any kind of reward.

And if we are unable to, we get absolutely nothing.

Since it was pretty understandable, I laughed a bit.

"Then, one more drink to at least congratulate us in advance."(renji)

As I said that, the bartender gave a wry smile as he filled my cup again.

He's a good guy, I think.

[You are, as usual.....I don't care even if you become late tomorrow,

alright?]

"Tomorrow's a rest day, I can drink as much as I want."(renji)

As I said that, my wodden cup was filled once again.

As I looked at that, my cheeks slackened.

This really is one of the many pleasures of travelling around, I think.

I can get to taste the delicious things of different villages.

While eating the Orc meat and salad, I drank the Ale. Such luxury.

[.....haa, how deplorable. You should moderate your eating habits really—-]

While hearing the usual catch phrase of my partner Ermenhilde, I drank my alcohol.

The journey with Miss Francesca might end pretty quickly. I'll feel a bit lonely then.

I'll have to separate from that healing chest of hers as well.

While thinking of things that would get me yelled at by Ermenhilde, I stayed late in the night.

Interlude – The Girl's Day (1)

Francesca Barton is a noble.

She had two elder sisters and since she could use magic, she was admitted in the Magic Academy.

Apparently, her family wanted her to live a safe life. Like a Scholar or a Merchant. And certainly, Francesca did have talent in those fields.

But, she liked magic. The moment when imagination is turned into reality. The radiance of magical energy. The exalting sensation she felt when she used magic.

Francesca Barton was a magician that loved using magic.

She was the third daughter of a noble family. She could never become the successor of her family. Her parents had raised her with love and care but sooner or later she would be betrothed to some other noble.

Then at least before that, let's try to enjoy life as much as possible. This was the reason why she left her house.

Her parents who had raised her like a princess——especially her father was extremely worried due to that though.

Or rather, he was clearly opposed to this.

But still she did it. Francesca Barton was the type that took action always.

Albana Magic Academy.

Though there are many magic academies in the Magic City, this one was the most excellent and superior among all.

Only nobles with a high court rank or those chosen for their incredible talent could only attend this academy. And Francesca who was attending this place was also a high ranked noble.

Her talent in magic was meagre. She could definitely be not called as talented.

The assessment from the teacher was ‘just average’.

Her theoretical/classroom knowledge was slightly above average and practical skill was below average. Although she was a hard worker, it is not worthy of any special mention.

This was the assessment made by the Francesca’s teacher.

From the point of view of the students, it was slightly different.

A serious honour student. She sucks a little in practicals but the effort she put in the class definitely gave a good impression.

And above all, her looks.

With her prided honey coloured hair made a perfect match with her smile that gave an impression as if a flower had bloomed.

Her personality was bright and cheerful and wasn't really too shy.

Her body that was much more developed than the other girls of her same age would pull the gazes of every boy.

Her big jade green eyes, her plentiful chest that seemed to be in imbalance with her delicate body, her slender waist, and her round buttocks, made her a beauty even among the Magic academy that was usually filled with beautiful women.

This also brought envy from her underclassmen, and jealousy from her classmates and upperclassmen.

But Francesca held the title of a noble. For the students, that was also a part that they were interested in.

If they could get in her good books, their position would also rise.

And if one was to stand alongside such a beautiful woman, even their status as a man would also rise.

It was a very obvious way of thinking so it couldn't be helped that the

boys of such an age would harbour such thoughts.

Although not daily, she would get words mixed with confessions and flattery at a usual basis. She had even received countless love letters as well.

Many became jealous of her due to that as well, but the person herself simply couldn't help it.

Changing her hairstyle to one that wouldn't stand out, putting on minimal makeup, she tried all such things but it only had the opposite effect.

She only wanted to live her school life peacefully but her surroundings didn't allow this to her.

The girl who had a meagre talent in magic was, in fact, the centre of attention of the students.

But that's only what happened till half a year ago.

Three students transferred into the Albana Magic Academy.

Normally, admission were taken only in the third month and transfers were not allowed.

But even so, for the first time in the history of Albana Magic Academy, transfer students were accepted.

It was obvious that it would become a hot topic for discussion.

And to top it off, the transfer students were God Slaying Heroes.

Francesca was surprised.

They were an existence only told in fairy tales, in heroic epics.

The 13 heroes that defeated the Demon God that had been feared by the humans and the beastmen.

And three of them had transferred into her school.

It was obvious that she would be excited, that she would be interested in them. Everyone wanted to lay their eyes on them. Of course, Francesca was also the same.

The[Brave] Souichi Amagi.

The [Saint] Yayoi Amagi.

The [Grand Magus] Aya Fuyou.

God Slayers that defeated the Demon God.

The holders of the [Goddess' Gift] that were summoned from a different world.

Even though they were of the same age, they were saviours of the world.

There was no one who didn't know about them.

And what each and every one of them was doing now had been made public.

Except for one of the thirteen that had disappeared after defeating the Demon God.

Renji Yamada. There was almost no info only regarding him.

That was because he had wished so. There were rumours that he was still fighting against the army of demons.

The rest of the 12 God Slayers always said that [It was only him that is loved the most by the Goddess Astrarea].

And of those 13, 3 of them had come to her Magic Academy.

Their class ended up being a different one but, she would end up glancing at them every time they crossed paths in the corridor.

They had such a presence or charm.

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(fran POV)

Opening my eyes, and seeing the sunlight seeping through the gaps of the curtains, I woke up hurriedly and a sharp pain ran through my whole body.

I writhed in agony on top of the bed.

Thinking about what was happening in my chaotic head, I realized that this room was much more modest than my own room.

And then I finally remembered that i was currently travelling.

“aaa…..”

A voice that did not seem suitable for a young girl like me leaked from my mouth.

As I endured the pain for some time, I finally became able to move.

And finally, I slowly raised my body.

Currently I was wearing a pajama that really doesn't suit an adventurer.

"……it hurts."

It had hurt even when I had to sleep outside for the first time and had ended up pulling an all-nighter, but right now the pain is worse than that time.

Since it's the first time I'm having muscular pains like these, I don't know what I should really do about it.

The man travelling with me did say to massage well but since I was too tired I had fallen asleep soon after taking a bath.

I think, that's probably the main reason.

I regretted as I hung my head,

But, no matter how much I dwell on it now, my muscular pains won't go away. So resigning myself, I endured it and decided to change my clothes.

Removing my silk pajamas, I put on thick adventurer like shirt and trousers.

I had chosen clothes that wouldn't emphasize my body line too much but I guess the womanly curves would end up showing even then.

I don't know whether I should be happy for that as a girl or should I feel bad as an adventurer.

Thinking about such things, after changing I sat on my bed.

I was told that today I should rest but I can't think of anything to do.

Or rather, the pains make me don't want to move at all.

Even while I sit like this, my joints are still aching with pain.

"I wonder how everyone is doing."

Saying that, I became a bit anxious.

Did everyone at school, already finished their exams?

Everyone was challenging the monster subjugation exams along with those god slaying heroes.

For the heroes who saved the world, it would be an easy task.

But, for us who haven't travelled like this, it was extremely difficult.

Actually, I had been really at a loss when I ended up having to travel alone.

I had invited those who had been unable to make a party with the heroes but for some reason I never got an answer back from them.

Maybe they had some pressure from home.

Anyway, I ended up having to travel alone.

If I had kept waiting, I would have run out of time.

Where should I go? What should I do? Without knowing anything, and roaming around in a carriage, I had almost ended up dying in the village I had ended up reaching.

Even though I am a student of the Magic Academy, I don't have any combat experience.

I had believed, without any reason, that it would be easy to fight monsters with magic.

If people of the same age as me could become God Slayers, I could also at least fight.

I’m sure, everyone else is also thinking like that.

It’d be nice if everyone is fine. Thinking that, I slowly stood up.

As expected, every part of my body still hurts.

Enduring the pain, I exited through the door.

“I’m feeling hungry……”

Judging by the height of the sun from the window, it should be around noon right now.

This is the first time I had overslept like this. I could only smile wryly at that.

As I came down to the first floor that had been made into a diner, I saw the man travelling with me taking his breakfast right now.

Renji-san.

An adventurer.

The man who saved me when I was about to die.

Defeating all those goblins instantly, he is an amazing man…….I think.

I’m not sure.

He’s probably strong but, but I can’t understand what kind of guy he is.

He taught me various things as well.

He’s really reliable but he would sometimes look at me with the same perverted eyes as those guys of my own age.

I guess being older in age doesn’t mean much but for some reason I can’t seem to hate him for it.

He would soon avert his gaze and I can’t sense any evil thoughts like normal men.

It’s, as if, he’s just looking at me.

Am I paying too much attention to it, I wonder?

That’s why, I can’t understand him.

I should probably be a bit more cautious but I simply can’t think of him badly.

Whether that’s because he had saved me from those Goblins or was it Renji-san’s natural virtue, I do not know.

“Good Morning, Renji-san.”

“It’s already noon though.”(renji)

“……haha, mind if we share a table?”

Speaking that, I sat on the chair. Renji-san was, as usual, playing around by flicking his medal with his fingers.

A ping ping sound resounded in my ears.

He was simply sitting on his chair lazily and was flicking his medal but for some reason he still seemed good looking.

It felt very adventurer-like.

That’s probably because that’s how I envision adventurers inside my head.

While thinking such rude things, I looked around.

Is an inn in a rural village really like this? The customers were only us and a few more men of the village.

“Are you fine with your muscular pains?”(renji)

“…….it really hurts.”(fran)

“haha, well, that’s normal.”(renji)

Maybe my voice seemed funny, he laughed loudly.

As he laughed probably because I hadn’t gotten used to travelling yet, I hung my head in shame and his gaze shifted towards my chest.

I hurriedly tried to cover up but, he averted his gaze before that.

Really, I can’t understand him.

I felt that he was a really weird person.

“What had Renji-san been doing until now?”(fran)

“I just woke up as well.”(renji)

He stretched his body, saying that.

I felt that I smelled alcohol somewhat.

“It’s already noon though.”(fran)

Was Renji-san also tired, I wonder?

When we had slept outside, I had soon fallen asleep. It was obvious who had been on watch all night.

He had also put up a tent for me and had also prepared the meals as well.

And I could simply do my best just to not fall behind while carrying only my own luggage.

Thinking like that, I ended up wondering just how much trouble I had already caused for this man.

Though he had said that we should go at my pace yesterday.

But that doesn't mean that I could be simply use those words as an excuse.

At least, not till we defeat the Orc.

"I usually sleep till this time. I'm weak during mornings."(renji)

"Is that so?"

I had many things I wanted to say but if Renji-san says that then so be it.

I wasn't really convinced but leaving it at that, I decided to order my meal as well.

Or rather, it's not like I had a huge appetite so I simply asked for a light soup that would be easy on the stomach.

Renji-san also raised his hand and ordered the same soup as me along with a meat dish.

Ahh he really is a man. Having meat just after waking up is impossible for me.

"Oh right, apparently some Orcs are living in the nearby forest."(renji)

"Eh?"

My head went blank due to the sudden words.

Orc, the objective of our journey.

Graduation exam—-if I can complete this, I'd be able to successfully graduate from Albana Magic Academy.

And my other objective as well……..

"It seems a bit troublesome so I'll go and scout tomorrow. Then we'll decide whether to take the request or not."(renji)

Just when I was thinking that we'll go to defeat it as soon as possible, I was told that first we'll need to do some recon.

For me it was it was something we should have done urgently but Renji-san is the more experienced one here.

And, his gazes aside, I think he is a reliable and a trustworthy man.

"Request?"(fran)

"Yesterday, the villagers had requested me for it. It's different that Miss Francesca's but it is an Orc subjugation request."(renji)

"Is that so?"

Yesterday, I frowned a little but apparently he had accepted a request while I was sleeping.

Even though I had collapsed from travelling for just one day, he really has an amazing amount of stamina.

Probably because they are used to travelling, all adventurers can move around like Renji-san I think.

"I understand. Will you take me as well?"(fran)

When I said that, he showed a somewhat surprised expression.

Did I say something really that weird?

“It’s dangerous, you know?”(renji)

“Since my objective is to defeat an Orc, I have already resolved myself for this.”(fran)

When I said that, he put his hand on his chin and began to think.

His chin still had a stubble which really stood out.

I think it looks really sloppy but it’s very Renji-san-like.

Probably because he has this nonchalant leisurely atmosphere around him, being sloppy really suits him for some reason.

…….well, just because it suits him doesn’t mean it looks very good though.

“I can’t really recommend that.”(renji)

“——is that so?”(fran)

But, even though I had requested, he did not allow me to accompany him.

Feeling dejected, my voice sank.

“There are three confirmed Orcs. Since I haven’t confirmed the situation well yet, I don’t have the confidence to protect you as well.”(renji)

Does that mean, once he’s confirmed the situation, he can fight while protecting me at the same time?

Monsters are a threatening existence. And the more the numbers they have the more advantageous the monsters will be.

And he is saying that he can fight against three Orcs while protecting me at the same time.

On being told that implicitly, I felt a bit pathetic.

This man was, from the very start, intending to fight not alongside me, but while protecting me.

“Don’t mind it too much. We’ll be doing the subjugation together. It’s your test after all.”(renji)

Maybe because he was worried due to my expression, he said that with a bright cheerful voice.

Somehow, he’s been considerate towards me from the very start. Finding that embarrassing, I once again hung my head in shame.

“C’mon look.”(renji)

Saying that, he flicked the medal with *ping* sound.

The medal that rotated in mid air had a jade gem in the centre and had intricate craftsmanship. It was surrounded by 7 gems of different colours which showed that it must be something of high value.

And above all, it had a holy, sacred aura to it.

……Though since Renji-san is always flicking it around, its value seems to be lesser than it looks.

“It’s heads. It’ll be fine, I’ll be back soon.”(renji)

Just as Renji-san said that, our order was brought to us.

A fragrant smell reached my nose and the empty stomach made an excited noise.

“Well, it’s rest day today. First focus on healing your muscular pains.”

“uu……”

Those words made me embarrassed again and I hung my head down with shame again.

The meal brought to us was white bread, salad and a hot steaming vegetable-filled soup.

It looks really delicious.

“Thanks for the food.”

Saying that, Renji-san joined his hands once and began to eat.

On Renji-san’s tray, along with the same dish as mine, a grilled dish of Orc meat is also present.

Thinking that, it looks tasty as well, my gaze moved towards his hands.

“That action/gesture was…….”(fran)

“Nn? Oh, its something like a habit.”(renji)

Before eating, there are words spoken to thank the goddess.

Especially, sisters and priests of the church would often do so.

When I also ate with my family, I also gave my thanks to the goddess before eating.

That’s why, I became curious.

“.....”

That ‘habit’, I felt I had seen somewhere before.

But I can’t remember where I saw that.

Chapter 7 God Slayer and Orc (2)

I walked through the pathway that didn't have much grass even though it was not a pavement, probably because villagers use this path a lot.

The sunlight was blocked by the dense and thick trees, and it was dim inside the forest.

Walking through such a place, being careful of not just monsters but normal beasts, snakes and insects as well, is much more tiresome for the mind than one would think.

I have gotten quite used to it but it would be painful for a beginner adventurer like Miss Francesca.

It was the right decision to have no brought her along with me. I felt a bit relieved now that I was sure that my decision was correct.

[We have come quite a bit deep but we still haven't found them.]

"Yeah."

I wiped the sweat on my brow with my sleeve.

My stamina is still fine but you get tired much more quickly when walking inside a forest.

I really want to find those Orcs quickly.

As I fixed my breathing after stopping for a while, I begin to walk once again.

I had arrived at the place told by the villagers but there were no Orcs there.

Either they had switched their den or they had left the forest itself.

Well, it's probably the former.

If there's no enemy that could endanger their lives, that village should be a great hunting ground for them.

They'll be able to find prey very easily.

I doubt they'll let go of such a hunting ground that easily.

Also—-

"A black Orc. Got any ideas about it?"

[Let's see. It should either be a High Orc or an Orc General. But I doubt either of those would live on the Imnesia continent.]

In the first place, if it was either of those two, it'll be beyond the scope

of my skills.

I might be able to take care of a High Orc somehow but I'm still not very confident.

An Orc General would be too much for me.

Also, both of them were existences that lived on Abenelm.....the continent of demons.

It really must be a new variety——probably a mutation or a subspecies.

It'll be troublesome if they start being born all over the place.

[The effect of defeating the Demon God might be affecting the world itself as well.]

"……I see."

Probably it was thinking about something similar, Ermenhilde also spoke similar thoughts to mine.

Defeating the Demon God.

It was necessary in this world. If one was to believe the Goddess Astraera's words.

The Demon God that was trying to destroy the world.

Summoned from another world, to return back to our own world and to save this one, we fought.

But, this world had been created by the Trinity including the Goddess, the Spirit God and the Demon God.

The Goddess created the humans and light, the Spirit God created the earth and the beasts, and the Demon God created the demons and darkness.

I don't know how much of that is true but it really was an interesting thing.

If that was true then we had killed one of the pillars(god) that had created this world.

In that case, rather than heroes we'll be criminals. It would be such a crime that it won't be weird if we were cursed till eternity for it.

But, this world blessed us as the God Slaying Heroes.

If this was a game, it would be over after defeating the demon god. A happy end. The hero will marry the princess and will live together happily ever after.

That might have been for the best.

But this is reality. Not a fairy tale like a game.

The world will continue even after the Demon god was dead. People will have to continue living their lives.

Just what kind of effect will come due to killing one of the Trinity, nobody knows.

It could be that the Goddess or the Spirit God that made us do so know what will happen.

“I really want to finish this and return already.”

[Again……?]

“It’s fine because you’re just a medal. I am the one who’s walking, sweating, and it’s hot, my body feels heavy and sluggish.”

[You really complain a lot——try to act a bit more motivated.]

For Ermenhilde, subjugating monsters could be said to be its only desire.

Its voice seems to be 20% more energetic than usual.

But for me, this is just a scouting run.

Since I plan to return after confirming the case of this black Orc, I'm feeling carefree.

Basically, the same as usual.

Well, if I really will find an Orc by being more motivated, I might as well try that.

As expected, I will have to walk away from the normal tracks of the beasts here. I gave a sigh.

Monsters, normally, don't step into human territory. Villages, Towns, highways created by humans *etc*.

Because the monsters know that they'll be hunted if they come closer.

But, once you step out of human territory, and come closer to monster dens, all monsters would instantly bare their fangs.

Just like what happened with Miss Francesca.

"Now then, what should I do?"

I brought out the medal from my pocket and flicked it.

With a *piing* sound, Ermenhilde rotated in the air and I caught it with

my right arm.

On opening my palm it was, Tails.

“Which one should I walk on now?”

[You hadn’t even decided?……]

I smiled wryly towards Ermenhilde’s fed up voice. I decide to step further deep in the forest where the trees were even thicker.

With a rustling sound, I walked through the bushes and grass.

[Renji, look near your feet.]

Suddenly, Ermenhilde realized something on the ground.

As usual, my partner really is sensitive towards things fallen on the ground.

I picked up the metal object near my feet. It wasn’t money. I felt a bit disappointed.

The fallen object was the clasp of a belt. It’s a bit of an unusual thing to have found inside the forest.

Probably an Orc must have attacked a human.

While thinking of that, I bent my waist.

I put my nose near to the leaves where I found the metal piece.

“It smells.”

[The smell of an Orc?]

“Yeah. They do have a very peculiar body smell.”

Seriously, I feel deplorable that I have gotten used to this of all the things.

I smiled wryly as I spoke Ermenhilde’s catch phrase.

But if I had not gotten used to such things, I would not have been able to go on journeys in the first place. I would not have become an adventurer.

Behaviour of goblins, hunting methods of Kobolds, smell of the Orcs.

There are many other such things as well which are considered as important knowledge to fight against monsters.

It’s a skill which would be useless in the modern world, but I obtained it here in this world.

I don’t really consider it bad either.

It’s fun to travel along with my partner Ermenhilde.

Though I really want to stop chasing after monsters like this.

I only want to enjoy the scenery, leisurely, while collecting herbs.

I long for such a life style.

But even so, right now I’m pursuing an Orc.

I guess that’s how life is.

[Concentrate.]

“I know.”

I focused my mind with Ermenhilde’s words.

I hate fighting but, seriously, I won’t be negligent here.

In front of the power of monsters, the life of a human is nothing but a fickle thing that could easily disappear.

“Found it.”

As I moved a bit more forward, in my line of sight…….was a clearing, even though we’re this deep in the forest.

It’s the dwelling place of the Orcs that they have made by toppling and mowing down the trees.

There, I could clearly see 11 Orcs.

…….There’s too many of them.

I had only heard about 3 of them.

I cursed inside my mind but that won’t change the reality.

Their skin colour was the same as normal pigs. But, they walk on two legs and were wearing a trouser-like waist cloth as well. Their hands held various weapons.

Their faces were the same as the pigs in our world and their cries were also the same oinking sound.

It’s weird how they can communicate like that.

Well, for monsters, the language of humans would feel the same I guess.

In the hands of those Orcs, there were weapons stolen from humans as well as wooden poles that looked like logs. Swords, hammers, some even had bows.

Their equipment was varied but their bodies were more or less the same.

With a height of 2m, their body was flabby like an obese.

Their arms were as big as human child's but the fact that they could hold a 2-handed sword easily with a single hand proved that underneath that soft-flabby skin, they clearly had trained muscles.

That body really is troublesome.

Although the skin seems soft, but underneath, the muscles are sturdy.

Since they do have a huge amount of fat, their legs have a lot of burden on it. But, that fat is able to block blades from even reaching till the muscles.

The best way to hunt an Orc is to destroy their legs and take away their mobility. Also, they can be taken down by spears or bows.

Their excessive fat is also the reason why they're so slow after all.

Even though their upper body grows so much, the lower body remains

under grown in fact.

An Orc is such an unbalanced species.

[There are quite a lot of them.]

“Way too many.”

Or rather, how did they swarm so much.

Monsters do that but I haven’t seen Orcs swarm like this many times before.

While thinking that, I moved my gaze away from the group of Orcs.

I’m looking for that black Orc.

11 Orcs in itself was a big threat but I want to confirm that black Orc as well.

It might be the reason why so many Orcs have gathered here.

—-there it is.

I whispered.

The black Orc.

It's look was basically a normal Orc with black skin. But there was clearly a difference.

The 11 Orcs are working but that black Orc is doing nothing.

It's not a high orc but it's something with a very similar presence.

That was my first impression.

"Do you know what that is?"

[I'm seeing that for the first time. Didn't see one even during the time we were going to defeat the Demon God.]

"Thought so."

I thought maybe only I had forgotten but it seems Ermenhilde had the same opinion.

Never seen before. That was our answer.

I really didn't think I'd find a new species of monster in such a remote rural village.

You really can't tell what life has in store for you.

I really want to live life in peace though.

[Should we kill it now?]

"……let me think."

What should I do? I asked myself.

It would be easy to take it down right now but after killing that black Orc, what will happen with those 11 Orcs?

That black orc is clearly the commander type.

It's the existence that is holding them in such a group.

Then, what would happen if I destroyed their head?

Humans would panic and retreat. A group is weak when their leader is gone. There is a chance that they might attack as well, but there are few humans who do that.

But, what of monsters?

They'd either run away inside the forest or go on a rampage and attack the village to take revenge for their commander.

I would be happy if it's the former but that sounds really difficult.

"What do I do, really?"

This way, the situation of that village is hopeless.

If this group of Orc were to attack the village, they would only be annihilated.

11 orcs are equal to a trained army platoon in terms of strength.

In this world, a platoon is made of three groups of 11-12 soldiers totalling in a formation of around 35 men in a single platoon.

To kill a single Orc, it'll take at least 3-4 normal soldiers.

A single Orc isn't a threat but a swarm of monsters is extremely troublesome.

Although it'll be different if there's a magician in the ranks but for a normal troop with no magicians, their war potential is as said before.

Skilled adventurers might be able to fight better but even then, they would still take a single orc with 2 men.

"Let's retreat for now."

[……mu.]

Ermenhilde gave a displeased voice.

It probably wanted to wage a battle here and kill that black Orc.

I was thinking the same, but the risk is too high.

And not to mention, in my current condition, I can’t display the cheat power of a god slayer.

As expected, it’ll be a bit too difficult to kill that Orc with a single knife.

Thinking that, I retreated while crouching.

Then———

“_____”

“……”

My gaze connected with the Black Orc’s.

There’s quite a lot of distance, it might be my imagination.

I quickly rejected that thinking. That Orc has definitely become aware of

me. And it ignored me.

In those eyes, I clearly sensed intelligence.

It overlooked me as it did not consider me threat probably.

"This is bad, Ermenhilde."

[What is?]

"That guy is extremely intelligent."

Our eyes had met, only that.

But, it did not rush at me, nor did it become cautious. It ignored me.

There's no way it'd didn't realize my presence. I think. No I'm sure.

Just by meeting eyes with it, I've understood more about that Orc.

That's why, I realized that it is trouble. It is a danger.

The fact that it ignored me means that it considers me as not a threat.

It'll be bad to leave that black Orc alone.

That’s my intuition, after spending 2 years while defeating the Demon God.

Those intelligent are definitely extremely dangerous monsters.

Using traps would be common, taking hostages, using the enemy’s weaknesses. They are existences that would do anything to win.

Honestly speaking, they are harder to defeat than stronger ones who come and fight head on.

“Let’s return to the village and have a strategy meeting.”

[Though whether that girl would be of any help in the first place is pretty doubtful.]

“That’s true.”

Though I want to ask for help from the men in the village as well but I guess Orc would be too much for them as opponents.

Monsters are a threat to even trained soldiers after all. It might be too much for the villagers.

The only one that can be of any help is Miss Francesca who can use magic.

And even that magician is an amateur with no experience.

I could only sigh.

“I hate trouble. That’s why I wanted to avoid fighting monsters as well.”

[Then don’t be charmed by women…….haah.]

Can’t help that.

That chest along with those upturned eyes are not fair at all.

Or rather, I wouldn’t mind if it was just normal orcs. If they were normal that is.

I looked back, but the black Orc doesn’t seem to be chasing me.

If it’s going to ignore me, then I can only fell thankful.

When our eyes had met, my stomach had turned cold thinking that I’ll have to fight it along with the 11 Orcs. If it’s going to let me go, then I will run.

Wondering about the humiliation of being let go by those pig-like Orcs?

It’s much better than dying.

There are fight where you simply cannot retreat no matter what but this isn't one.

Even Ermenhilde understands that's why it didn't say anything when I chose to fight when I'll have better chances of winning.

It isn't saying anything but, it does seem to be angry.

It really has too much pride.

I caressed the medal inside my pocket with my finger.

[We, who defeated the Demon God, to turn our backs against mere Orcs…..how deplorable.]

"It's better than dying."

[……For Renji to give a sound argument, this even more painful.]

I'll really cry dammit.

In the end, they didn't chase us even till I left the forest.

Chapter 8 The God Slayer and Orc (3)

Now then, what should I do?

There are 12 Orcs inside the forest. And one of them is a type I have never seen before.

If this is a funny story, I want a better one than this.

While tilting the wooden mug filled with Ale as I sat near the window of the bar, I thought such things.

Just now, when I reported this to the village chief, he asked me whether I could do something about it.

But why? I'm just an adventurer. I am not a monstrous hero or brave protagonist that could remain unmatched even against multiple monsters.

That's why I was pondering, what should I do?

There's a part of me that wants to work hard for the reward though.

[You only have two choices, either protect or abandon this village.]

That's true. I gave a wry smile.

Well, I do have various choices in how I should protect them though.

If I'm lucky, we might be fine till the squad from the royal capital appears here.

The Orcs might even go somewhere else as well.

That one is intelligent. It should be well aware of the consequences of baring fangs against humans.

Kill and be killed. Humans and monsters. It's a never ending battle. If they don't want that, they'd probably not come out of the forest—-

"Ah, I finally found you."

While I was pondering over such things, my employer, Miss Francesca appeared from the entry of the bar.

My lips became softer on hearing that beautiful voice that doesn't really suit a bar.

"Ou, Miss Francesca, Over here."

As I raised my hand, I gave a small sigh.

Probably, she came because I didn't contact her even after returning from my scouting trip.

As expected, alcohol doesn't taste good when you're making a irritated face. Seeing her beautiful face, I took another sip of the Ale. Yup, it's delicious.

[You goddamn drunkard.]

"Ha—-no mistake in that."(renji)

"?"(fran)

Miss Francesca who sat on the other side of the table looked at me puzzled as I talked to myself.

It seems, my mouth becomes loose whenever I drink alcohol.

It might be a bad habit of mine to reply to Ermenhilde out loud.

"Renji-san, what are we going to do about the Orc subjugation?"

"aa, as expected it's about that eh?"

"As expected?……we did talk about the matter of Orcs yesterday, didn't we?"

Oh right.

While we were talking, the shopkeeper came to take her order.

She ordered a fruit juice and I also asked for some water instead of more ale.

If we're talking about the job then, as expected, it's bad manners to be drinking while doing so.

Also, I really need to seriously think about it as well. Let's sober up already.

"By the way Miss Francesca, how's your muscle pains?"

"uu……it's fine now."

As I asked that, she shrunk back a bit before looking me back in the eyes and answering.

Ah, so it still hurts eh? Her reaction is really easy to understand.

It seems this woman sucks at lying. Finding her bluff amusing, I ended up laughing a bit.

At the same time, her cheeks became red and she hung her head down.

[Is it fun bullying younger ones?]

Of course, it's super fun.

Bullying young ones is the special right of the older ones.

Bringing Ermenhilde out of my pocket, I flicked the medal with a *ping*.

"It has become a bit troublesome actually so I am hesitating whether we should take up the village's request or not."(renji)

"We won't accept it?"(fran)

As the medal landed in my palms it was, Heads.

"I'm thinking of accepting it actually."(renji)

At that moment, I took the water that the shopkeeper had brought.

Miss Francesca also took her juice and took a sip.

"But, it'll be a bit difficult with a simple frontal attack."(renji)

"Frontal attack?"

"Yes, charging at them straight forwardly, or attacking them and burning them directly with magic. Such a fighting style would be difficult."

Saying that, I took a sip of water.

At such a time, what's important is the place where we fight.

We're going to take on 12 of them. It'll be good to be in a place where we won't get cornered.

In a forest, if one were to use the trees well, but even the Orcs should be already used to fighting there as well.

"It'll be dangerous if our opponents are 12 of them after all."(renji)

"…….what?"

Miss Francesca looked at me as if she was looking at something weird.

It's a bit amusing.

"How many, did you say just now?"(fran)

"12 of them."(renji)

"_____"

Her jaw dropped and she froze like that.

She's making a stupid face which I would have definitely captured if I had a cellphone or a camera.

Well, I won't actually do something like that though.

[Well that's a good reaction.]

Yeah, I agree.

As I sipped my water, finally Miss Francesca returned to senses again.

"....why is Renji-san still so relaxed!?!"(fran)

"I'm not really calm. I'm worrying over what I should do as well."(renji)

[It should be said that you're already used to it, eh?]

Well, it's exactly as Ermenhilde said.

In fact, Miss Francesca's reaction right now is the proper correct one. Even I think so.

I was normal person of the society just three years back, how did I become like this?

Back then I would be surprised like Miss Francesca at every small thing as well.

But soon, I stopped being surprised at anything.

12 Orcs? And one of them is a new species and super intelligent as well.

But demons who are higher types of monsters, among them the demon lord, and even among them the existence that made the whole demonic species, the Demon God!

Compared to them, though these 12 Orcs are troublesome and scary but it's something that'd make me panic.

What's really dangerous are existences like that Black Orc and monsters against whom I'm useless alone.

Dragons or Vampires, Giants or Undeads. These are opponents that I can't fight without my comrades.

"Even if you panic, what we have to doesn't change."(renji)

"But still, 12 of them is……"(fran)

"Well, it is a bit too much."

I laughed.

Miss Francesca looked at such a me with drooping eyebrows.

“I have a way, that’s why we’ll accept the request.”

Also that black Orc. I want to take care of that at all costs.

I don’t know why but it really gives me a bad feeling.

“…….What will Miss Francesca do?”

“Me?”

“Yes. Taking on 12 of them is going to be difficult. Probably, I won’t be able to fight while protecting you.”

As I said that much, her expression became stiff realizing what I meant.

I can’t fight while protecting you so you’ll have to protect yourself.

It’s not something that should be asked of a rookie adventurer really, I gave a bitter laugh inside my mind.

A dangerous job like this would normally by done by even veteran adventurers only after gathering some numbers and in perfect condition.

It’s not a request that a newbie adventurer and the weakest God-slayer should take on.

That’s why, I hate fighting monsters.

It’s filled with unexpected circumstances. The earnings are great but the dangers are great as well.

As expected, it doesn’t suit me at all I think.

“I’ll accept.”(fran)

While I was thinking such things, she turned towards me with a resolved gaze.

Those green eyes were clearly looking at me directly in the eyes.

“There’s the case of my test but……I’m also an adventurer now. Also, it’s the duty of a noble to help the villagers.”

“That’s a brilliant readiness of heart you have there but, you might die you know?”

When I said that, those eyes swayed a bit.

As expected, the fear of death is great.

Duty of a noble and all that is simply a façade. Humans, anything that's alive, is afraid of dying.

Even I'm the same. There's no way this girl who's younger than me won't be scared.

Thinking that, this girl who wants to save these people even though she's scared looked really strong to me.

Even though I turned my back towards the duty of a God slayer.

[You're being mean now.]

Don't say that.

I ended up smiling wryly to my partner's words.

Maybe she sensed something in me, Miss Francesca looked at me with a slight sullen expression.

That expression is also really cute. Man, beauties really remain beautiful no matter what expression they make.

"Well, I'll try to make sure that the danger remains as less as possible."(renji)

"Eh?"

“I can’t make a newbie do something too difficult. I guess it’ll sound cooler if I simply say that I’ll protect you though.”

[No, it’s fine if you say that, you God slaying Hero.]

That’s impossible, I shrugged my shoulders.

That’s not my character after all.

“I’ll go from the front and you’ll cause disturbance with your magic from behind. If we try to think of a too complicated tactic, it’ll only blow your fuse after all.”(renji)

“Fuse?……Eh?”

“I mean that you’ll end up panicking during the actual thing. You were scared when you were attacked by those goblins right?”

When I said that, she slightly nodded while hiding her face with the wooden mug.

She looks like a small animal.

“This time it’ll be even scarier. After all there are going to be 12 Orcs. That’s much scarier than mere 5 goblins.”

I flicked Ermenhilde (medal) with my thumb.

As it rotated in the air, I grabbed it in mid air and, Heads.

“It’s heads. We’ll make it somehow.”(renji)

“No you’re supposed to say that you’ll definitely make it succeed there……..”

“I won’t say something like ‘definitely’. I’m not that amazing.”

I laughed and then I sighed.

But I can’t help it.

‘Definitely’ That word belongs only to hero protagonists. It shouldn’t be used like a villager C like me.

“That medal.”(fran)

“nn?”(renji)

Miss Francesca’s gaze moved towards Ermenhilde in my hand.

“Is it something precious to you?”(fran)

“nn……”

I wonder.

I carry it along like it’s obvious and is the existence I’m most familiar with.

It’s precious but I can’t simply describe it with just those words.

[…….]

Also, this stupid God Slaying weapon is being suddenly meek right now.

“It’s a cursed medal. If I let it go, I’ll die.”(renji)

“……is that actually okay?”(fran)

“It’s fine really. I’m fine as long as I don’t let it go right?”

Looks like I ended up worrying her seriously.

Making fun of this girl might be amusing or troublesome or just difficult, I think.

[Tch]

By the way, Ermenhilde was clicking its tongue.

It’s fun to tease this one as well, in its own way.

Its important to think of difficult things but I guess being carefree like this really suits me.

Those Orcs and that new species black Orc.

Well, there’s a mountain full of problems in front of me right now.

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“Now then, I think we should start the special training.”(renji)

We were currently in a clearing a bit away from the village and the highway.

There were no signs of Goblins or other monsters for now.

Though some might appear to see what we're doing as well.

"Even though you say Special training……..I can only fireball or ice arrow and other such basic magic, you know?"(fran)

As she said that, she dropped her shoulders in an apologising manner.

I wonder whether that was really okay as a student of the Magic Academy but I'll let it go for now.

"That's enough. I'll have you imagine something even more simpler than that."(renji)

"Simple……is it?"

"Yeah."

Saying that, I pointed towards the ground.

"Dig a hole."(renji)

"……."

She looked at me with a really suspicious gaze.

For some reason, the magicians of this world specialise only in either direct attack magic or very domestic-based magic.

The former include releasing a fireball, ice arrow or making strong lightning fall as well.

While the latter includes creating water or crushed ice for use, or lighting dark areas *etc*.

But for some reason they don't use magic that involve moving objects or digging holes like this.

During our fight with the monsters, I did see magicians easily blow up enemy trenches so maybe they find it too inefficient, I think.

I find it pretty convenient though, things like pitfalls and traps.

Even the [Grand Magus] that was with us first found flashy things better but after realizing the merits of using pitfalls, she started listening to me as well.

Generally the imaginations involved are, confirming the enemy, creating the fireball, making it fly towards the enemy, and hitting it.

Even basic magic require these 5 processes.

But pitfalls are basically, looking at the ground, imagining a hole in it.

At most, only 2 processes are necessary. Though there is also regulating the size and depth of the hole but still it's still shorter than normal magic.

Thus, I was thinking of having Miss Francesca do the same as well.

It'll help her in protecting herself as well after all.

The fact that it has a small activation time itself is a big advantage.

"A pitfall. You'll make Orcs fall into them and it's over. It won't kill them but they'd become unable to do anything."(renji)

"....."

Also, since its magic, all she has to do is imagine the hole directly beneath where the Orc is standing, that's all.

There's no need to go through the trouble of luring them into them either.

Afterwards, you can deal with them however you want as long as they are in the hole. Bury them, attack them with magic *etc*. Since they won't be able to attack back anyway.

Though the value of their meat would fall due to damage but it's a pretty safe way of hunting them.

"That's an amazing plan."(fran)

When I explained, she began admiring me for it.

For some reason, magicians really like to think of only flashy magics.

Though I don't have any proof but I think anyone can use flashy magic if he wants. Not to mention that the mental fatigue and magical energy consumption is also huge.

Shouldn't most magicians be thinking of being more efficient?

With this, her use of magic should also turn to different directions, I think.

[……Another weird magician is going to be born.]

"How rude."(renji)

I flicked the medal with a *ping*

[A magician specialising in pitfalls and restraint magics is definitely a weirdo. Your way of teaching is wrong, definitely.]

But I really think that's more convenient though.

Restraint techniques are good during few people vs. few people. As

expected, only our [Grand Magus] could use such techniques even against a whole army.

Using roots of trees and vines, she really was undefeatable inside forests.

Well, its all a result of my training though.

Since pitfalls are simple, they can be imagined even during close combat so its really convenient.

Though I don't know that since I can't use magic but since our [Grand Magus] had said so, it must be true.

It's good enough even if it can slow the opponents down during battle since it'll make them more vigilant against you.

"Then, I'll try."(fran)

"Ou."(renji)

Moving away from her, I sat down on a rock nearby.

[You won't train?]

"I don't know how am I supposed to even train with a knife?"

In the first place, my weapon isn't a knife. Ofcourse, it isn't a dagger either.

I don't really see the need to train with such weapons.

Unsheathing the iron knife, I spun it around my hand.

"Orc's skin doesn't look like I'll be able to cut with this."

[Obviously. The Hero Yamada Renji's weapon isn't something pathetic like that, it's me.]

My lips loosened on hearing that somewhat prideful voice.

That's true.

"My weapon, is only you."

[Yes.]

As I turned my gaze towards Miss Francesca, her body looked to be swaying a bit.

Magical energy.

A power that every magician holds and is used by them to bring about supernatural phenomenon.

Their colours are varied and just like Miss Francesca's magical energy is colourless, it can be red or blue as well.

If I recall correctly, the colour of the magical energy also represents one's talent.

Our [Grand Magus] was golden, [Sorcerer] was dark purple——in his words, it was the colour of darkness.

Both had high level of talent, I think but I can't really remember who was better.

Probably, they were around equal I think.

While I was thinking that, a 50cm diameter hole was created right in front of me. It's depth was….about 30cm.

The earth that had disappeared had fallen beside Miss Francesca.

She must have imagined digging the earth out to create a hole.

"Too shallow. The Orc commander is one head taller than me. You'll have to make it more bigger and deeper."(renji)

"Yes!"(fran)

I ended up giving a wry smile on the energetic answer from her.

I feel like I'm a instructor at a training school. Not that I have any actual experience of doing that though.

But, magicians really are amazing.

When I look at this, I sometimes feel that maybe I should have also asked for being able to use magic when asking for the Cheat abilities.

I would have been unparalleled with magic that didn't exist in our world. It's a situation that every man would yearn after.

Aah, I really did something wasteful.

[What happened?]

"Nothing."

As I sighed, Ermenhilde asked me in a worried voice.

Well, the cheat I had asked for was [the Power to kill even God], that's why I was able to meet and talk with Ermenhilde like this so I guess my worries are for naught.

"I'm really glad that I met you."

[……then why the hell were you sighing?]

I am being doubted.

My partner is really heartless. Seriously.

Chapter 9 The God Slayer and Orc (4)

The most inconvenient thing after coming to this world was, the lack of internet.

Internet. The symbol of modern civilisation. The treasury of knowledge. The string of electricity that can connect to anywhere.

You can find any and everything on it.

What you want to know, what you don't know, things you find weird *etc*.

And, everyone is connected through it.

For example—someone you want to meet, someone you want to contact with, someone with whom you want to talk and even with people you don't know anything about.

That's why, I really want the internet here.

Why looking at the clear blue sky, I thought of this.

Currently, Souichi-kun should be going to a school somewhere, he should have free time as well.

Couldn't I call him and have him kill these Orcs for a bit?

After all, it’s the duty of the Brave to kill monsters, right?

“Renji-san, how does this hole look?”(fran)

While breathing heavily, Miss Francesca asked me so while I was thinking of stupid things.

Her expression was filled with confidence and a wide smile.

Her hair stuck to her forehead with sweat and her bright smile felt way too dazzling.

…….though what she’s saying is very weird.

Should a girl of this age be talking about ‘holes’ like this in such a loud voice? Though I am the type who likes it.

But I think I’ll be killed if her parents knew of this. While I thought of such things inside my head, I moved my gaze towards the pitfall created by Miss Francesca.

“Not bad, I guess?”(renji)

“Alright!”(fran)

Width-80cm, depth-around 2.5m. It’s a well made hole in which I’d completely fit.

It’s a size out of which an Orc would definitely be unable to get out.

Miss Francesca held her both hands and seemed to be filled with happiness.

She must be really happy because I think she might be crying a little.

Well, after being made to create over 50 holes, anyone would cry I guess.

“Then, let’s fill up the holes next.”(renji)

“……”

“If you dig then you also have to bury them back. If you leave so many holes beside the highway, I think you’ll be scolded you know?”

“…….even though Renji-san was the one who made me do this.”

“It’s fine. I’ll also help.”

As I gave a wry smile as she seemed to be a bit angry, I picked up the shovel I had borrowed from the villagers.

Seeing me like that, Miss Francesca breathed a sigh.

[Ah…….It was the same when Aya created these holes for the first time as well right?]

Yeah. It's a nostalgic memory.

After that, as a result of the training, a specialised hole creating magician had been born.

That really was a pitiful incident, really. It's a part of the sad past of the [Grand Magus]. Even now it's the same though.

While thinking about such things of the past, I lowered my shovel into the mountain of dirt beside Miss Francesca.

And threw it inside the nearby hole.

"But, Renji-san can't really use magic right?"(fran)

"huh?"

While I was filling up the hole, Miss Francesca said in a surprised voice.

By the way, she's filling up holes back with magic.

Yeah, magic really is convenient.

"Why are you so informed about magic?"(fran)

“I’m not really that informed. Probably.”

“No such thing. At least, I think only Renji-san has thought of a magic to create such pitfalls.”

Really?

Well probably, I think someone somewhere is still using them, those pitfalls.

“I’m told that often. That I have a weird way of thinking.”(renji)

My way of thinking about magic is similar to elfs and pixies…….spirit magic of the demi-humans or so I’m told.

Humans are the ones who specialise in direct attack magic.

In contrast, the demi-humans use surprise attacks, restraints, status afflicting——basically indirect magic.

Humans and demi-humans have begun to have a better exchange in culture in recent years since they found a common enemy in the Demon God.

Before that, though not to the extent of fighting, they simply tried to keep out of each other’s way.

Humans who cut apart, burned down and expanded their territory while destroying nature.

Demi-humans, who thanked the earth and lived together with the nature.

They couldn't get along so easily.

In that sense, we might have to thank the Demon God.

Well, they have such a relation. They aren't close enough that they'll teach other their systems of using magic.

Until and unless one was special like us, there would be no way to get such information.

[Renji, you're the weirdest and the most eccentric of all, after all.]

For some reason, my partner said that with a happy tone.

While sustaining a wound on my not-so-delicate heart, I sighed.

"Ah, sorry……"(fran)

"Maybe she thought something about it, she ended up apologising like it was normal.

That hurts in its own way so please stop.

After that as well, while talking about useless things, we filled back the holes.

About my journeys till now, what I was doing before I became an adventurer, why I became an adventurer *etc*.

Why is everything about me? Do young noble ladies find pleasure in adventurous tales?

Surprisingly, she didn't talk about the Orcs even once, probably because she was scared.

Tomorrow, we'll be fighting.

Let's stop here and rest and face them tomorrow in our perfect conditions.

I didn't say it out loud but Miss Francesca should have also realized it by now. Even while walking and laughing, her expression was slightly stiff.

"It'll be fine."(renji)

After filling back all the holes, I flicked the medal Ermenhilde with my thumb.

As the setting sun reflected on it and made it shine, I caught my rotating partner with my hand.

“It’s Heads.”(renji)

As I opened my hand, just as I had declared, it was Heads.

“It’ll go well. We’ll complete the request safely.”(renji)

As I declared that, her stiffened expression seemed to have loosened a bit.

Well, I had seen which side I was catching before I actually caught it though.

My kinetic vision is strong enough to be able to do something like that. The Cheat ability isn’t just for show.

[As usual, Renji is good with his words, eh?”]

I returned that fed up voice with a wry smile. Ermenhilde, adults are such dirty beings.

I have tricks and secrets but this is perfect to calm someone.

As I shouldered the now used shovel and smiled, she smiled back.

As long as I can see such smiles, I don’t mind being sneaky.

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The next morning, while it was still dim outside, we had come to the entrance of the forest before the sun began to rise.

To live one has to sleep and eat.

Even Orcs sleep at night and become hungry as well.

So we’ll be attack while they’re sleeping or eating. We didn’t attack at night because there was a chance to get lost inside the forest.

I am used to walking inside the forest but if it’s a surprise attack, I can’t use light either. So the chance of getting lost was very high.

With Miss Francesca along, all the more so.

“Will it really be fine?”(fran)

“Well, if Miss Francesca can walk properly, we’ll be fine.”

“……mouu.”

Tunic and green trousers along with an overcoat and an iron knife on my waist.

Also, I had a 2 small pouches filled with potion.

There’s no real chance of using the potion. They are meant to be used after the battle.

They aren’t immediately effective like the potions in video games so they can’t really be used during battle.

In my pocket was my trusted partner. I’m with my usual equipments. The preparations are perfect.

While Miss Francesca was fastening her leather breastplate with her fingers, I confirmed my equipment as well.

“Are you fine with just that equipment?”(fran)

“Orcs attacks are strong enough that it’ll be over with a single hit. Even with heavy armour, I’ll get crushed inside.”

Rather than that, it’s better to simply avoid.

Miss Francesca can simply make them powerless with pitfalls while staying out of their range.

After inspecting our equipment, we continued into the forest.

I know the place. As long as they haven't changed their place of dwelling after that, that is.

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"Renji-san is amazing."(fran)

How long have we walked inside the forest?

You really lose the sense of time while you're walking inside a forest.

Miss Francesca was walking behind me with just enough distance that she doesn't get left behind.

After walking through almost 80% of our distance, Miss Francesca talked to me.

We both had been silent after entering the forest so I was a bit surprised.

Maybe due to the atmosphere, even Ermenhilde had been silent for some reason.

Well, I wouldn't be able to reply if Miss Francesca was beside me so it would have ended as a one-sided bantering though.

.....that would have been torture in itself.

At times we'll create pitfalls and traps and mark them.

Just in case they might come useful if we ended up running.

"What's so amazing?"(renji)

As I covered the pitfall with grass, I asked back.

"Even though we're facing 12 Orcs, you're still calm as always."(fran)

Am I?

Normally, I would talk more, fool around and enjoy seeing Miss Francesca pant as she is unable to get used to walking in the forest.

When I thought that way, maybe I am also a bit tensed.

We killed the Demon God. We even fought against the demons and the Demon Lord.

But still, I was scared.

Humans die easily. Because I know that. And I am also a human.

Even if we're called God Slaying Heroes, we're still humans.

"I'm scared. My hands are shivering."(fran)

"I see."

Me too, I couldn't say that.

After all, I'm the senior here, I'm the elder one here, I'm the man.

It's always like this.

My comrades were all younger than me. There was only one woman that was in the same age group as me.

That's why I couldn't complain, even when I was scared I wasn't discouraged, even when wounded I didn't cry.

I had no choice but to be so.

I was the older one, the man, because I was the adult.

…….I have such a duty I think. Really.

In forests, in dark places, it’s bad to be too silent. I’ll end up thinking only in the bad direction.

Standing up, we began walking again.

“It’ll be fine. You won’t die.”(renji)

I simply said just that.

There’s no meaning behind it.

You will die when your time comes and a person who can live through anything will definitely live through it.

That’s why, there’s no meaning behind my words.

But the silence was painful so I said that, that’s all.

“Yes.”(fran)

But, if simply words can make one calm down then I'll say that as many times you want.

I think that way. I'm not strong enough to show that with my attitude or abilities.

My cheat, [Power of God Slaying], is really weak. I can only use it in limited conditions.

That's why, I'm different from those 12, I'm the weakest.

[What is it?]

Unconsciously, I was stroking Ermenhilde inside my pocket.

There's no meaning to it. Only——it was to divert my anxiety.

[Even though, you're actually a coward.]

Don't say things like that.

I'm the man here, the adult here. Even if I want to cry, even if I'm scared, even if I'm shivering, I can't act weak in front of her.

That's what my role is.

[Renji won't die. I'm here after all.]

Ah, is that so.

I smiled wryly and once again stroked the medal inside my pocket.

In that time, we reached our destination.

Hiding inside the bushes, I examined the surroundings.

The settlement of Orcs.

Their numbers are…..14

“It grew again.”(renji)

“…….are they sleeping?”(fran)

In front of our view, in a place without trees, Orcs were sleeping.

Some used tree stumps as pillows, some used their weapons as pillows, some used each other as pillows.

Are you a gathering of drunkards? Seeing that human or rather, old man like behaviour, I felt that Miss Francesca’s tension seemed to have lessened a bit.

“Even monsters sleep.”(renji)

“So it seems.”

“They didn’t teach you this at school?”

“……uu.”

It seems they don’t teach this.

I had told her this before but she must have been in doubt even then. After talking a bit more, her tension lessened a bit more.

She’s a student of magic academy after all, they must be teaching only magic.

Rather than fighting monsters, they give a more scholarly image.

“The first stage of the plan seems to be a success.”

“Yes.”

If the Orcs were to wake up now, it’ll completely become a head-on battle instead of a surprise attack.

But now, we should be able to turn at least half of them powerless.

Calming a bit, I searched for the problematic black Orc.

But, it wasn't here.

I tried changing locations but I still didn't find it. Is it not with this group?

It's a new species, maybe it was removed from the group……..no way.

That one was definitely the leader of this group. It must be in a different place.

I could search for it but we don't know when these ones would wake up.

The sun would also reach high enough soon. There's not much time left before the Orcs wake up.

"Let's take care of the small fries first."

"Orcs are small fry?……I understand."

I could only think of Orcs like that but, as expected, for the people of this world, even the lowest level of monsters are a big threat. For even a magician.

"Probably, the black Orc would barge in between."

“Black?”

“Yes, black.”

I couldn’t think of any other name for it after all.

Other than its black skin, it looked completely similar to a normal Orc.

“I’ll be the one to face that one. Miss Francesca, you shouldn’t do something unreasonable and simply take care of the normal Orcs from a distance.”(renji)

“Black…….is it because of that Orc that so many of them have gathered here?”

“Well, who knows? I’m not a scholar either so I’m not sure.”

Those intelligent guys can think of reasons behind why these Orcs gathered.

I’ll do what I can do the best.

Killing them.

I took out the iron knife from my waist.

I glanced at its rusty edge and gave a sigh.

[If turns dangerous, use me.]

“I know——“

I took a deep breath.

Whether I’m tensed or excited, my heart is beating faster.

But, there was no sweat on the palms that were holding the knife.

Miss Francesca also drew her 70cm long short sword.

The tip of the sword was trembling.

“It’ll be fine.”(renji)

I say that once more.

“You will not die.”(renji)

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The surprise attack was a success.

8 of the Orcs fell in the pitfalls, and their surprised shouts woke up the rest of them.

But even then, they were in chaos and were unable to take proper actions.

Searching for their weapons, they panicked as they looked at their fallen comrades.

Jumping out of the bushes, I closed in towards the nearest Orc.

While surprised, it was able to swing its punch towards the sudden intruder but even faster than that, the iron knife cut at its underarm.

"Tch."

[Too blunt.]

Seriously.

I did expect this but I could only click my tongue when the blade

couldn’t cut through.

But, the ORc that busy looking at me, fell inside the pitfall created by Miss Francesca.

A dull could have not reacted when a pitfall suddenly appeared underneath it.

5 remaining.

Without minding their fallen comrades, two Orcs came towards me with their weapons.

“funn”

Moving to the area between those 2 Orcs, I kicked the knee of one of the Orcs.

Orcs had small legs. That’s because it would be impossible to carry their overlarge body with normal human like legs.

This made them unable to make tight turns and lessened their reflexes.

Though it looked like I was trapped between two Orcs, they didn’t even face towards me right now.

I kicked once again. With more strength this time.

This time, with a dull sound, the Orc's knee bent to an impossible direction and broke.

It's thanks to my enhanced leg strength given by the cheat. If I were to kick seriously, I could blow away even a giant.

With that leg strength, the Orc's one knee was snapped.

Unable to understand what had happened, the Orc stopped moving.

Finally, the other Orc turned towards me and raised its weapon.

"Renji-san!"

I ignored Miss Francesca's voice.

Avoiding the incoming blow with a paper-thin distance, the other fallen Orc's head was crushed instead by that blow.

If it's impossible with my iron knife then all I have to do is use a different stronger attack.

The dull Orcs were good for that.

4 remaining. Also, the Orc that had attacked me just now fell down due to the gravity.

Right underneath me, the pig raised its hands high trying to crawl out of the hole.

It's fingers reached the tip of the hole but it simply didn't have the arm strength in it to carry itself out of there.

"3 remaining."

Those 3 were running towards me from the other side.

I stepped back due to their intensity and ran while dodging the nearby pitfall.

I'm not trying to escape though.

"Pitfall!!"(renji)

A pitfall was created in front of my path. Jumping over it, I heard groans from behind me.

As I looked back, Orcs that had been chasing after me were reduced to 2.

We can do this. A slight sense of hope was born in my chest.

But, the 2 Orcs who judged Miss Francesca to be more of a threat than

me began running in my opposite direction.

I quickly stopped and began to chase after the Orcs that were ignoring me.

Since they were slow, I quickly caught up and kicked their back with my full strength.

And just like that, another one fell into a pitfall.

[What a ridiculous fighting style…….only one of them has actually died, you know?]

“If I can fight safely then it doesn’t matter.”

Last one—-just as my eyes caught towards the remaining one, the black Orc entered my view.

Since water was dripping from its body, it was probably bathing till now.

It really does live leisurely. But, it also proved that it really was intelligent. An Orc that bathes is too weird after all.

Maybe it returned in panic, its breath was ragged.

“Miss Francesca!”

“Yes!”

A pitfall appeared underneath it.

But it dodged it by jumping back a second earlier.

——It’s not just intelligent but also quick, eh?

And, the remaining normal Orc headed towards Miss Francesca without hesitation.

“Run! Calm down and—-“(renji)

[Dodge, Renji!!]

While I was trying to speak to Miss Francesca, I was startled.

Above the black Orc, a lump of rock was floating.

I know what that is.

“An Orc is using magic!?!”(renji)

As I hurriedly jumped, a rock the size of a human fell down on the place I was standing earlier.

The ground burst and dirt flew up. I was surprised by its strength but I quickly fixed my posture and avoided falling into a pitfall.

This is the first time I'm seeing an Orc using magic.

No matter how intelligent it is, does it even possess magical energy? There's a limit to how unfair it can be.

As my head was in chaos, I lost sight of the black orc.

[Any injuries?]

"None."

I briefly answered and gripped the iron knife in my right hand.

While crouching, I looked at the surroundings. Hole, hole, hole. The black orc is……..

"Renji-san, are you alright!?(fran)

"I'm fine! Rather than that———"

What about you? Before I could ask that, the black Orc aimed for Miss Francesca this time.

This time the atmosphere distorted. And the figure of the black Orc swayed like a heat haze.

“It’s not just rocks?!”

I began to run. At the same time, a hole was created below the black Orc.

This time it fell in the hole……it was too shallow. It stopped after falling to its knee level.

But, it seems this was able to stop the activation of its magic.

A good way of using it. That girl might have the talent to be a pitfall expert magician.

While thinking such stupid things, I moved to a position where Miss Francesca was protected by my back and then, I started running towards the Black Orc.

The black Orc gave out a cry.

Pointing towards it stomach, I positioned my knife. If I can’t slash it then I’ll just pierce through it.

I’ll end this Orc right here. A magic using Orc is definitely a danger.

Letting my guard down thinking it was a normal Orc, just how much damages would——

“Kyaaaaa!?!”

“!?”

Stopping due to the sudden scream, I turned towards Miss Francesca.

There, my fellow traveller had been captured by an Orc.

Focusing on the black Orc, I had forgotten about the remaining Orc, I finally realized that.

And—-

“Aah, I should have known.”(renji)

The Black orc stretched its arm towards me. Behind me was Miss Francesca restrained by the Orc. I won’t be able to avoid the magic being fired this time.

In front of its arm, a fireball appeared. Dark black, a flame I had seen before.

As my line of sight matched with the Orcs, I felt like it was grinning.

I stopped my legs and faced the black orc and put strength into the arm gripping the iron knife.

Take on the flame? That's impossible. The tunic I'm wearing won't defend me against that falme.

If I dodge, Miss Francesca will die——-

[Good grief.]

Unusually, Ermenhilde gave a slight impatient voice.

But that voice, made me feel calmer.

The black flame became larger, as large as a human and it was still growing.

Let alone me and Miss Francesca, it would even swallow up the other Orc as well.

Well obviously. That's the kind of flame that is.

I know. Just how many comrades and enemies that flame has swallowed.

"Ermenhilde, lend me your strength."

[——Roger that.]

My, Yamada Renji's, cheat is very weak. It can only be used in certain specific conditions.

That's why, unlike the other 12, I was the weakest.

But, in those certain situations.

In a situation where those certain conditions have been fulfilled.

I'm also, definitely one of the [God Slayers].

Chapter 10 The God Slayer and Orc (5)

The Goddess declared.

That she would give the power to save the world.

The Goddess wished.

Please save the world.

The Goddess smiled.

The world shall be saved.

The Goddess asked.

What do you wish for?

.

The Brave said.

I want an undefeatable will.

To never lose to anyone no matter what the time.

.

The Grand Magus said.

I want God-like power.

Magical energy that could even create miracles.

.

The Sorcerer said.

I want an eye that can see the future.

An eye that can change whatever unreasonable future that may come to them.

.

The Sage said.

I want to use every magic that exists in this world.

I want to become an existence that can use all kinds of magic.

.

The Monster Tamer said.

I want friends.

Friends that will never betray me and will always believe in me.

.

The Swordsman said.

I want a sword.

A sword that cut apart any and everything, even fate itself.

.

The Warrior said.

I want the power to fight.

To be able to use all kinds of weapons, I want to be the strongest warrior.

.

The Saint said.

I want power to save others.

A power that can heal any wounds, I want a gentle power.

.

The Wiseman said.

I want knowledge and techniques.

I want to create convenient items, magic items that don’t exist in this world, I want the knowledge and techniques to build them.

.

The Cook said.

I want to cook food that will bring upon smile to everyone’s faces.

I don’t want the power to fight, I want to cook meals that can save a person’s heart.

.

The Knight said.

I want power to protect my comrades.

A power that can protect even the world, I want to become the strongest shield.

.

The Avenger said.

I want power.

Simply pure power to defeat all of my enemies.

.

.

.

.

My, Yamada Renji's, wish was very simple.

Yet it was a complicated, cruel and unbelievable wish that made even the Goddess laugh loudly.

That's why I was provided with, the strongest partner, Ermenhilde.

That might have been some sort of pity on me.

Me, who could never become a Hero, to have to live along side many Heroes, she might have wanted to give me something that would listen to me and understand me at all times.

"Renji-san!!"

Black flames approached. Black, dark, flames that could easily swallow a human.

Miss Francesca's voice resounded, maybe she was worried for me or she wanted me to do something about this.

Letting go of the iron knife in my right hand, I put my left hand inside my pocket. What I grabbed was my strongest partner, Ermenhilde.

My weapon, my partner, my trustworthy weapon could only be this one.

[Three of the covenants have been released.]

From the hand that grabbed Ermenhilde, a jade coloured magical

energy gushed out.

Seven Covenants that bind my [God Slaying Power]. Seven conditions that activate it.

The method of the Goddess to fulfil Yamada Renji's wish was truly distorted and beyond saving.

A power that did not suit a Hero yet specialised in killing Gods.

Conversely speaking, it was a power that had no use except when fighting against Gods.

Against normal monsters, it was nothing more than a slightly sharper weapon.

Even though it was a power to defeat the Demon God, it couldn't cut even low-level monsters properly.

"That's more than enough."(renji)

But, against a [God]I was not inferior to even any of the other God Slayers.

Three have been released.

Probably they are, [To Protect someone], [My own will to fight] and——

[Fighting against the Demon God]. These must be the conditions that have been cleared right now.

Against a mere Orc, it's more than enough.

A blew away the incoming black flames with simply the hade magical energy coming out of Ermenhilde.

Furthermore, the magical energy took shape and took the form of a sword of the same colour.

It's not simply a beautiful gem shaped like that. It's a divine sword that could cut apart even a Mithril Golem……that's only if it's being affected by the Demon God, that is.

Against a normal Mithril Golem, it'll probably break.

"Alright, it's been three months, right?"

[……Don't say it. I'll feel like crying.]

3 months ago we had fought against an Ogre in a rural forest to complete a request, my feelings were excited like that time now.

The blade of the sword was jade green. The material it was made of was unknown. It was a mysterious sword whose strength changes depending on the number of covenants that have been released.

The handle and grip were golden. Underneath the grip was a lump of big jade. Inside it, 7 small gems of different colours were studded.

Among those 7 gems, 3 were lightly shining right now.

“Renji…san?”(fran)

“nn”

As I looked back, I saw Miss Francesca who was restrained by the Orc.

Her dumbfounded expression looked truly amusing and though it was rude, I ended up laughing a bit.

“Sorry. I made you face something dangerous.”(renji)

When I said that, the Orc that was restraining her let go of her and ran away at full speed.

Probably it was afraid of the attack that was about to envelop even him as well. Or maybe it was simply afraid of me.

I ended up smiling wryly. Even though, normal Orcs pose a bigger threat to me than that black Orc.

Facing its back, I threw daggers of the same jade colour made out of magical energy towards it.

Without missing, the daggers struck into its head as if they were being sucked to their target.

I gave an apology inside my mind. I had no reason to let it go alive from here. At the same time, while scratching my head I turned towards the girl who had fallen on her bottom .

“It’ll be helpful if you don’t get too surprised.”(renji)

“A, eh……yes.”

[No, that’s impossible. You’re a Hero, you’re like an ‘idol’ to normal people who can never reach them.]

“Where the heck did you learn that word…….”(renji)

It must be him, that chunnibyo patient wannabe Sorcerer.

I sighed. I might have to complain to him one of these days.

Well, it’s been an year since we met though. He must be energetic as usual. I thought of such things.

From Miss Francesca’s expression, she must have realized my identity so I didn’t try to hide my conversation with Ermenhilde either.

The name Renji was rare but it wasn't like there was no other with that name.

But, Ermenhilde's name was famous. [The God Slaying Weapon]. The Sword of the Goddess.

Well, its not actually a sword but there's no need to go and correct them.

It is the sword that's easy to use, I looked towards the jade sword in front of me. And it's true that this is the most common form in which I use it.

"I don't know the reason but if you can use the power of the Demon God then even I can fight."(renji)

Why is it an Orc?

Why on the Imnesia continent?

Why was it born in such a rural place?

What was happening?

Does it have a connection with the defeat of the Demon God?

There are too many questions but I doubt my opponent can answer

them.

As expected, understanding an Orc's words is impossible. That's why——

"Die."

I doubt it even understood what I said. I swung the jade divine sword. I'll have to tell him by my actions.——Black Orc, I'll kill you.

Showing my will with my words and actions, I closed the distance with it.

As the cheat in my body became even stronger, I ran even faster than normal.

At my full strength I was able to clash swords on par with the Demon God, a mere Orc who can use magic wasn't even able to react in time.

It was a miracle that it was able to even generate the Demon God's flames in the same direction as me.

But I couldn't simply ignore it either. Flashing my sword, I cut away four of its fingers.

The fingers that were cut away without any resistance flew away in all directions.

And then, it screamed. The pig's squealing resounded in the forest that had been covered in the silence of the morning till now.

The pain caused its concentration to waver and the Demon God's flame dissipated.

Frowning due to the loud scream, I cut away its throat with the return swing of the sword.

That was it. With just that, it was over. The screams disappeared and the Black Orc fell on its knees. The blood spray dirtied my cloak. Oh damn.

And, then it sunk in its own pool of blood. A heavy gloomy sound *zuun* marked the end of the battle.

After this, all that's left is to take care of the orcs fallen in the pitfalls.

Fuu, as I exhaled, the divine sword turned back into jade green magical energy and dissipated.

"I'm tired. I feel like I worked enough for another half year."

[You barely did anything at all……..]

The amazed voice sounded really comfortable.

As expected, it suits me more when I'm not fighting.

Maybe it sensed my thoughts, Ermenhilde silently sighed.

“Ah, um……”(fran)

“Ah…oh right.”(renji)

I hid my face with my right hand.

[Give up. You wanted to protect someone, right? That’s why you got me, the God Slaying weapon.]

Yes.

That was the cheat, the [Power of God Slaying] that I wished for.

I wished for a God Slaying weapon.

And, I wanted to protect someone with that weapon.

That was what Yamada Renji had wished from Goddess Astrarea.

To protect someone with the God-Slaying weapon.

That was a truly distorted, cruel and a hopeless wish. An unreasonable wish that was like a contradiction in itself.

……..Why did I wish for something like that? If I were able to return to the past, I'll go punch myself.

No, that's not it.

I was simply, affected by the youths around me.

I can say it now, if I got the chance. A power that would make me comfortable or give me absolute fortune or something like that. I want such a power.

That's why, I sighed.

The words I had easily said, its extremely complicated implication, by the time I realized it, it was already too late for me to do anything.

"Shall we return?"(renji)

"So suddenly!?! Um….the Orcs?"(fran)

We can't carry them back even as corpses. Let's go back and ask the villagers for help."(renji)

The weight of an Orc was about 200Kgs. We couldn't even carry one of them with us.

We'll have to get a carriage from the village or it'll be too difficult to move them from here.

But still, it'll be many round trips before we finish this.

If we leave them as corpses, other beasts would come after them so we'll leave them just as they are inside the holes.

"It's a good haul this time. With this much it'll be easy for quite some time."(renji)

"U, Um……"

Hahahaha while laughing loudly I tried to move away with the momentum but from behind me a timid voice came.

[It would have been nice if she had been fooled with the momentum, right?]

"Don't say it like it doesn't involve you, stupid."(renji)

[Who's stupid?!]

I looked towards the sky.

How should I fool her?

Suddenly, my gaze moved towards the corpse of the Black Orc.

As if it was mud, it was disappearing into the ground while melting.

Miss Francesca also looked towards it while following my gaze.

“…….Wh, what is that, that black orc?”(fran)

“Who knows? It should be either a mutation, new species, or a hybrid or something.”(renji)

Or was it the revived Demon God? Or did it eat the flesh of the Demon God? Or was it a descendant of the Demon God?

Though I have no idea how the Demon God that had been defeated on the continent of demons had arrived to the Imnesia continent.

[It looks it’ll turn into something troublesome.]

“Don’t say it so happily.”(renji)

[If Renji would work seriously, then even troublesome things are happy things for me.]

“Are you my mother?……”

What kind of philosophical things is this medal trying to say?

Also, I am working seriously! It's fine as long I can spend everyday while enjoying it.

While sighing, I began to walk in the direction of the village.

And, Miss Francesca began chasing after me.

"Umm, Renji-sama?"(fran)

"You've got the wrong person. I'm just an adventurer, Miss Francesca."(renji)

Denying her instantly, I shrugged my shoulders.

I mean, an adventurer that has simply killed a God and a great noble. She's the one with the higher status right? (T/N: Right……..c'mon dude….)

[Kuku, Renji-sama, eh? Kukukuh…….]

"Yeah, it's funny. Laugh as much as you like, it doesn't suit me I know, goddamn it!"

I'm not a hero.

I can never become a hero.

That's because my wish was a wish that is unreasonable as well as contradictory.

My cheat, [Power of God Slaying] can only work when someone else is in danger.

A man who can't fight without putting someone's life in danger can never be called a Hero.

And that too, without fulfilling many specific conditions, a power that can't be used at all can only be considered as weak.

That's why I'm weak. Weaker than any of the other God Slayers.

I looked towards the sky where the sun had begun to rise.

[An Orc with the power of the Demon God, eh?]

"Problematic things are special rights given only to protagonists."

[And you're also one of them.]

"No way."

I flicked the medal, Ermenhilde, with my thumb.

As it fell down on my palm it was, Tails.

Aah.

“I really hate trouble.”

A sigh leaked my mouth.

.

.

“By the way, to whom have you been talking to?”(fran)

“.....I’m just mumbling to myself.”(renji)

“I, I see…”

[Like I said, it’s impossible. Well, if Renji is fine with this, I won’t say anything though.]

As expected it will be painful to treat it as simply ‘mumblings to myself’.

Again, I could only sigh.

This is why I hate fighting monsters. Unexpected things always happen.

…….Well, it was my bad to have used the [Power of God Slaying], I guess.

It’s really my bad habit to depend on Ermenhilde every time I’m backed into a corner.

Chapter 11 The God Slayer and Orc (6)

While gazing at the bonfire burning in the centre of the village, I enjoyed the wooden cup filled with Ale.

Yaa~, how wonderful. There's nothing more delicious than free alcohol.

"Puhaa!"

[You are the happiest when you're drinking aren't you?.....Haah]

Why did you have to sigh there?

While confused to Ermenhilde's reaction, I drank from the cup while sitting on the seat prepared by the villagers.

The villagers who had been freed from the threat of the Orcs decided to prepare a feast for me as thanks.

Most of the villagers didn't even know that so many Orcs had gathered there but even though they seem to be super excited with the feast and all.

This world barely has many ways for enjoyment after all. Even I felt a bit more excited than usual. The alcohol also tasted better than normal.

By the way, there was no one around me. I was alone. It's not like I'm

lonely. Miss Francesca who was surrounded by the villagers looked this way at times but it can't be helped.

She's the hero of the Orc subjugation this time.

I only defeated three of the Orcs after all.

The one who defeated the remaining eleven was her after all. See, she's more suited as the hero than me.

Also, it was obvious that a beauty like her would be more popular than a random looking guy like me.

[You really like bullying.]

"I know."

Snickering, I ate the smoked Orc meat and vegetables prepared as the side dish.

Fumu, this really goes along well with it.

While enjoying the taste of the smoke meat with my Ale, I satisfied my appetite.

[What will you do know?]

“Let’s see, I haven’t thought yet.”

[……]

As I said as if didn’t concern me, an amazed sigh came.

No, it really must have been too amazed.

But——

“I want to meet someone, without everyone noticing me.”

By everyone I mean my former comrades.

And by someone, also I mean my former comrades.

On my contradictory words, Ermenhilde gave a sigh again.

[……the Demon God, eh?]

“I wonder about that.”

But, for some reason, a feeling of certainty is there in my heart.

The fact that 3 of the covenants of Ermenhilde were released.

If three of them had been released there, they can only be: to protect someone—Miss Francesca, my own will to fight. And the last can only be – In a fight against the Demon god. I can't think of any else.

And it did in fact use the Demon God's flames.

That flame was too special for a just a new species of an Orc to be able to use. If such Orcs start appearing unreservedly, it'll be nothing less than a nightmare.

Well, in the end it was just a mere Orc though.

Monsters that could use magic existed like flies in the demon continent Abenelm.

"Um……."

While I was thinking such things, Miss Francesca returned with a tired expression.

Maybe she was made to drink alcohol by the village chief and the men, her face was slightly red.

As I looked towards the bonfire, couples, lovers and families were enjoying the feast together.

"nn, oh well done."(renji)

“No, not that…..or rather, shouldn’t it be Renji-sama that—“

“Those kinds of things don’t suit me.”

I shrugged my shoulders.

I know what she wants to say but I’ll deny her in her still.

“Also, rather than an old man like me, a beauty would be more popular.”

“…….I don’t really think so though. It was Renji-sama that defeated that black Orc after all.”

Averting her gaze, but with a smile, she said so.

Probably, she reacted to the word ‘beauty’ I think. How innocent.

[Even though you realize that you still say such things, you really are the worst…….]

“And you’re bitter as usual as well.”

Replying that, I sipped my Ale.

“Ahem. Rather than that, Renji-sama—“

“No, can you stop with that ‘Renji-sama’?”

“That’s……it will be too rude of me.”

“No in fact, making a noble talk like that is rude of me I think.”

Well, I don’t really treat nobles in the proper manner anyway either though.

After all I’m drinking Ale in front of a noble like normal. When you talk about manners, it should be more of that kneeling on one knee and stuff like that.

While looking at the stiffened Miss Francesca, I wondered about what I should do.

It has been like this all the time after completing the subjugation of those Orcs.

I am supposed to be just a normal adventurer. And it would look weird if the hero of this village stayed so humble towards me like that.

And I also want myself to be treated as a normal adventurer.

I doubt it’d be that easy though.

Well, I have somewhat gotten used to such things after being

summoned as a God Slayer to this world.

I didn't want to get used to it but, everyone around me started bowing their heads around me. Living like that for 2 years straight, one would get used to it even if it's irritating.

It really was uncomfortable to see a 40 year old knight commander bowing respectfully to a 15 year old boy.

Even the boy himself was flustered about what to do. (T/N: note that he's not talking about himself here.)

"Well, with this my contract with Miss Francesca is also over. I am praying for you to successfully pass your test."(renji)

Thanks to the reward I received from Miss Francesca and this Orc subjugation, my wallet is warm.

I wonder where should I go next.

There's Utano-san and Kuuki-kun in the royal capital. Also Toudou.

Able to use all kinds of magic and also fast in thinking. The [Sage], Utano Yuuko, on whom everyone depended during our journey. She's also the same age as me.

Kuuki Yuta, who is currently enrolled in the knights squadron if I recall correctly. He should be 20 this year I think.

And, the cook Toudou Hiiragi who has apparently opened up a restaurant in the royal capital. He's 2 years younger than me at 26.

Everyone else is also at other big cities I think. I'm not sure of their exact locations though.

If I have to talk about the Demon God, then, let's go to Toudou.

In his restaurant, we can talk while eating his delicious meals which I haven't eaten in a long time.

That might be good. My wallet's in good condition right now as well.

"....."

While I was thinking that, Miss Francesca was looking at me with a troubled smile.

"Wanna sit?"(renji)

"Then excuse me."(fran)

Even though there's such a beauty in front of me, it's rude of me to be thinking of other things I guess.

Since she seemed to be holding a fruit juice in her cup, a smell

completely different from Ale came to my nose.

Wait, she didn't drink alcohol at all?

"What will you be doing from here onwards?"(Fran)

"nn?"

While I was regretting the fact that I didn't take her to a bar even once, she asked me that.

By here onwards, she means after parting with her?

Even if drunk, I can still understand that much.

"I'm thinking of going to the royal capital. That or.....maybe take some other request in some village."

Well, I have things to do but my destination isn't set yet.

For the time being, I simply want to go eat Toudou's cooking.

"Then, will you escort me till the Magic City?"(fran)

"No, won't you be fine with a carriage? I won't take a carriage you know? Too costly for me."(renji)

"……I see…."

[Even she's amazed.]

Shaddup.

Just because my wallet's a bit filled right now doesn't mean I can start spending on such luxuries.

My reward this time was 1 gold coin from Miss Francesca.

Also, 4 gold coins for the 13 Orcs. This will be divided between me and Miss Francesca equally.

(T/N: Reminder that in this world Silver>gold>copper.)

And also, almost every part of the Orc is eatable. Its intestines can be made into sausages and if sold to a merchant as dried meat or smoke meat, 1 Orc could get you 50 coppers, if prepared well, sometimes even 1 gold can be made.

And there were 13 of them. The villagers were super happy to have gotten such a stock. It could be sold for money and could also be used as preserved food for winters.

Thus, currently I had 3 gold coins in my wallet and also the change remaining from the 1 gold I had received as advance from Miss

Francesca. I'll be able to live a relaxed life for some time.

"Well, I doubt we'll get any carriages here though."

It seems this village doesn't really interact with other villages.

It's not that remote of a place so it must be because they don't have any specialties here.

If they were a lake/sea, they'll have fishes, the village I was in before had medicinal herbs and Alcohol. This village also has alcohol but they don't have enough to be sold as a special product.

And so merchants don't come to such villages. They don't earn much here after all.

They have nothing much to sell means that they don't have any stock either.

They do have Orc meat now but this is only a one-time thing.

Let's hope that they're able to sell that meat for as high price as possible.

"Yes. Also, they don't know when a merchant will pass through either….."(fran)

“Well, that’s troublesome.”(renji)

Though she was able to face the Orcs, I’m still anxious to let Miss Francesca travel on foot alone.

Our contract is complete but our relationship isn’t that of strangers either.

I’ll have nightmares if she died alone on the way.

“It’ll take at least one week on foot to reach the Magic City, eh?”(renji)

Saying that, I looked towards her.

Somehow she seemed to making an amazingly happy face so I ended up looking away again.

That was embarrassing. Young ones really have so much energy. While thinking that, I diverted my thoughts.

“I’ll get a reward right?”(renji)

“Of course!”(fran)

[You sure don’t forget about that, huh?]

“Obviously.”(renji)

As I flicked the medal, Miss Francesca was covering her mouth with her hand and laughing.

She can't hear Ermenhilde but she must have realized who I was talking to.

I did explain that to her just in case so at least I won't be treated as a lunatic who talks to a medal.

"You get along well, right?"(fran)

"Not really."(renji)

[.....]

Now it was sulking. That part of Ermenhilde is really cute I think.

"I'm envious."(fran)

It looks fun to her.

Also, since Miss Francesca still hasn't gotten used to travelling, it might take 10 days to the Magic City.

Considering what she said, even with 10 days we should still have enough time for her test. I think, she still has 2 weeks. Well, if we find a

carriage in between, it'll be even faster though.

If that happens, I'll also get relieved earlier. Magic City is full of nobles after all, there might be a few who know me there. If possible, I don't want to get close to that place.

It might be fine to separate after getting her close to the city as well.

While I was calculating such things inside my head, I sipped my Ale.

"If possible I'd prefer if it stopped the continuous scolding you know……"(Renji)

[If you lived normally and systematically, I won't say a thing.]

Is that so? If I start living like a normal person, then you'll start asking me to live like a hero next.

As I took another gulp of the Ale……the wooden cup was empty.

I sighed.

"There are God Slayers even in the school I go to, you see."(fran)

"……"

[Well isn't that great. You'll achieve you're objective even without going

to the royal capital.]

No no, it might not be that good.

Just when I was thinking what to do about my empty Ale, Miss Francesca gave me another cup.

She really is a sensible child.

“Thanks……is that so?”(renji)

“Yes. Souichi-sama and Yayoi-sama. Also Aya-sama. Those three.”

[Those brother and sister and your disciple eh?]

“It wasn’t something that exaggerated. Or rather, those guys are far more stronger than me……”

I wonder how can such a person be my disciple?

In fact, in terms of ability, won’t I be the disciple? I’ll only be a useless disciple since I can’t even use magic though.

[Is that so? I remember her running around you saying Renji-san~ Renji-san~ back then though.]

“It was a long time ago.”(renji)

That doesn't mean it'll be the same even till now.

In fact there's a high chance that they'd glare at me with cold gaze and ask where I was and what I was doing after leaving them like that. On imagining that, I felt a bit scared.

If I was talked to like that by them who I think of like my younger brother and sister, even I won't be able to recover from the shock.

I started feeling depressed just thinking about it.

Or rather, those three are together in the Magic Academy eh?

They should be around 18 right now. It's an age perfect for going to school I guess.

But even then, while travelling around the world, defeating monsters, fighting the demon lord, killing the Demon God, they were only 15,16 years old……

"I'm amazed they didn't become delinquents."(renji)

[That's true.]

We two……well, me and an item, recalled such old memories.

While we did that, Miss Francesca tilted her head confused since she couldn't hear Ermenhilde.

I guess from the side I must really look weird.

"Shall we call it a day?"(renji)

"Already?"(fran)

"I'm tired after all."

Saying that, I shrugged my shoulders.

"I worked enough for half a year."(renji)

[Work more!]

If I feel like it. Whispering that, I stood up.

"Miss Francesca also, we'll leave the village tomorrow so go to sleep if you're tired."(renji)

"Yes, I understand."(fran)

As I looked up, the red waning moon could be seen.

While hearing the voices of the villagers, I began to walk.

[…….you won't let her hear my voice yet?]

"Well, I'm not sure how much I should trust her."

I do trust her well.

As a person that is.

But, I don't know the circumstances of the noble called Francesca Barton yet.

It's normal for something unexpected to happen during monster subjugation.

But even then, is it really not weird for schools to let students gamble with their lives like this in this world?

I haven't heard anything like this but……..in the first place, I'm not sure how schools are like in this world.

"I really don't want any more trouble."

[Then you should have just abandoned her.]

"haah…..you say that as if it's so easy."

[I have a slight understanding of what kind of human Renji is after all.]

Stop it, it's embarrassing.

I flicked the medal with a *ping*.

"Well, in any case, it's only till the Magic City."

Tails.

I sighed, once again.

[Even though you hate trouble you can't abandon even strangers. That's why, Renji is a Hero.]

I have no intention to be one though.

"I'm not a Hero. That's why, I want to live peacefully in a rural village."

To become able to fight only when someone gets into danger.

A Hero like that doesn't exist.

Interlude 2 The Academy Life of the Brave

(Souichi (Brave) POV)

Albana Magic Academy.

It is the oldest academy with a honourable origin. Publically, that is.

True, it is honourable and is definitely the oldest academy in the Magic City as well.

Every student that goes there either possesses a high status or is highly talented in magic.

But, that doesn't necessarily mean that all of those students possess a proper personality as well. After all, they are boys and girls in their teens. Even if they know what's right or wrong, they lose to their own curiosity.

They want to indulge in dangerous things, hating boredom, they seek for thrill.

And even when they know that it's bad and dangerous, they still end up doing it.

"So?"

"It really was troublesome, you know? The demon inside the grimoire

sealed in the magic room was really strong.”

“fuun”

A blue robe worn over a white blouse. One could tell at a single glance that the robe that had gold embroidery was a high class item.

The fabric also looked excellent. I don’t really know but apparently it had been created with a fabric which is very popular with the girls, and both Aya and Yayoi were very happy with it when we first came here.

A knee long skirt of the same colour as the robe and underneath it were black stockings. That was the uniform of the Albana Magic Academy.

It is considered as a somewhat obvious fact in this academy that girls don’t show of much of their skin.

The uniform remains the same, just with thinner fabric, even in summers so apparently it’s really hot though.

My childhood friend wearing that uniform was informing me about the incident that happened in the magic room last week while puffing her non-existent chest proudly.

I’ll get beaten to death if I said that so I won’t though. I have become mature. The mouth is the source of calamity.

“Well done, I guess.”

“…….you’re really speaking in a tone as if doesn’t really concern you, you know?”

“After all it’s a demon that could be sealed inside a Grimoire right? Something like that won’t even be a proper enemy for Aya.”

The fact it had been sealed inside a grimoire means that most of that demon’s magical power had been sealed inside the book.

Even if the seal was released, all the magical energy won’t return back to its body instantly.

Then, Aya, who fought on par with the Demon Lord won’t even have any problems in defeating it.

Her neat black hair that had been tied to the left side as side ponytail slightly swayed.

Big, cat-like eyes. They were also black.

It’s a bit rare in this other world but she looks like a typical Japanese.

Similarly, myself as well as my aforementioned sister, Yayoi, also have the same colour of hair and eyes.

“So you sneaked into the Magic Room and laid your hands on the sealed grimoire. As usual, I’m envious of your stimulating, thrill-filled

lifestyle.”(Souichi)

Saying that, I turned towards the notes spread in front of me on the desk.

As for me, I could only worry for the test in the next class.

I looked towards her with a gaze asking her to let me study.

“Souichi, you still suck at studies eh?”(Aya)

“Aya, you’re just too intelligent.”(souichi)

I had difficulty just getting used to the letters of this world, and at the same time, this childhood friend of mine in front of me could easily read even complex grimoires.

This must be the difference between a genius and a normal person, I couldn’t help but think like that.

I may have been praised as the Brave and whatnot but inside I’m still a normal person.

I specialise in fighting but suck at studying. Even the Brave is a normal human.

“Is that so?”(aya)

“After all, Aya, you can even read those earthworm like letters of those magic writings. When did you even learn something like that?”

“Yuuko-san taught me during our journey.”

On hearing that, I feel that maybe I should have also learnt something like that as well during our journey.

Not just how to swing the sword. Well, it’s too late now though.

As I sighed, Aya laughed at me.

With just that, the whole class focused on Aya.

Aya is cute, or so I’m told. I don’t really understand though.

She’s popular with the guys of the class and some even confessed to her. Even though she sinks them everytime.

Aya, already has a guy she likes after all.

By the way, my younger sister Yayoi who is in the class one year below ours, also gets confessed to a lot.

And apparently, a condition that first they have to go through me before that has been set apparently. Yayoi said that when she got

confessed and got me needlessly involved in the chaos.

.....Even though I'm not, why the hell do I have to act like I'm some over-protective elder brother?

"I did say that, didn't I? To read books every time we stopped at inns?"(aya)

"That's true."(souichi)

Saying that, I dropped my shoulders.

"By the way, do you know? A letter came from Yuuko-san yesterday."(aya)

"Huh? For what?"

Just when I was going to finally start reading the notes again, Aya started talking again.

Does she not have a single friend? I shouldn't say that out loud.

"Renji-san is near this city apparently."

"Eh? This is the first I'm hearing of such a thing!?"

I raised my voice due to the sudden amazing news.

Everyone's gazes focused on me, in a different meaning than Aya's, and I cleared my though and calmed myself down.

Renji-niichan.

During our journey to kill the Demon God, he is a man who travelled with us. The oldest among us all and who was always gentle with us.

Even though he was lazy, he was amazingly strong. A person who always took the coolest parts.

He's also someone we admire greatly. No matter how painful the situation was, he always walked in front of us. We travelled while chasing his back.

.....he got us lost sometimes though.

When I was in pain, or tired due to the journey, when I lost someone close to me, he was the one that comforted me. He always stayed by me.

.....he taught some weird things to cheer me up though.

Peeping, or guiding me through the night city, *etc*.

After that, we were scolded a lot by Yuuko-san though. Even though we concealed ourselves, how did those guys know about it?

I still don't know the reason.

Well, I'll think about such nostalgic things later.

"Was Renji-niichan found?"(souichi)

"Yeah. It seems he accepted a request in a village near the Magic City."(aya)

"Ah, so he really is working as an adventurer."

"So it seems. He seems to be helping people as always, I guess."

Saying that, Aya laughed happily and somewhat proudly.

Why the heck is Aya acting so proud? I shouldn't say that out loud either.

"Before that, he had been exterminating an Ogre in the south right?"(souichi)

"That was 3 months ago. This time, he had been exterminating Orc that seem to have gathered. I think there were 15 of them."(aya)

"haaa……..As usual eh? Renji-niichan."

“fufun.”

While I was surprised, Aya puffed up her chest proudly again. No, you aren’t the amazing one, Aya.

Heh, I smiled wryly while looking at her face.

For Aya, Renji-niichan is special.

Since we’re childhood friends, I know since I have been the closest to her.

Aya had been always chasing after Renji-niichan’s back. She always went to talk to him on her own.

“Also, he sold his Mithril sword to a village that was having money problems as well. It has become quite a big topic at the Royal Castle, it seems.”(aya)

“……as usual, the things he does is……”

He always stays one step ahead of our expectations.

I think, there are only 13 of those Mithril Swords in the whole world that we possess.

Well, it’s quality is obviously lesser than Er-san but I doubt its

something that can be sold dirt cheap.

Even a single sword can buy a whole mansion easily.

To sell it to a village having money problems eh?.....I gave a sigh.

Well, obviously it'll become a huge topic. I hope the King isn't angry. Though Yuuko-san would be definitely angry, I think.

"I think he stayed for about a month in that village."(aya)

"After that, he went for the Orc subjugation?"(souichi)

"Yeah."

He really lives freely, as usual.

That is very Renji-niichan-like though.

"That's good right? Renji-san is safe."(souichi)

"Don't say such ominous things, idiot!"(aya)

I was scolded. Why? Before I could even think that, my head was hit.

It was lightly but it still hurts. And once again the gazes of the class

focused towards us.

Leave me out of this.

“Renji-san won’t die that easily. Mou, saying such unlucky things……”(aya)

She started grumbling now.

Well, I think the same way though.

But I did get worried since his whereabouts went missing about three months ago.

I felt relieved knowing that he’s fine. Aya is the same. Her expression feels much softer than usual.

She had been sighing a lot recently so I’m happy as well.

“I don’t really get it but sorry.”(souichi)

“Don’t apologise if you don’t even know the reason!”(aya)

I was hit again. Why??

Getting hit two times is unreasonable so I looked towards her only to get glared at.

I averted my gaze.

For some reason, I can't win against Aya. It has been like that since we were children. I ended up sighing towards such a me.

When I did that——

"Don't be so weakly!"(aya)

I was scolded again.

In the end, I couldn't study at all for the test. I could only sigh.....haah.

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After the test was over, I left the class.

It was so-so. In the end, I think I was able to do well.

Even though the lesson ended just now, barely any students could be seen.

Aya should be with her friends. Yayoi as well.

I, for some reason, felt like eating alone.

“Time for lunch~ lunch~”(souichi)

As I moved towards the cafeteria, I felt my lips slacken a bit.

I must have become happy due to what Aya told me.

Renji-niichan. Though I believed that he was fine, it still is a relief to hear it properly.

I think it should be the same for Aya as well. Among all of us, Renji-niichan was the one who was the most fixated on [Killing the God].

When asking for the cheat from the Goddess, we wished for fighting power and other convenient powers.

But even then, only Renji-niichan asked for a power solely to defeat the Demon God.

The [God Slaying Weapon] Ermenhilde——Er-san.

It was a weapon which was like a very normal weapon against anyone except the Demon God. This made Yuuko-san and Hiiragi-san feel very

sad at first.

Though it could talk and was a funny person. Well, not a person but a medal.

In reality, Renji-niichan was only slightly stronger than an average human in fights except when fighting against the Demon God or his descendants.

All of us knew that. But even though we knew that, we ended up depending on Renji-niichan.

In a fight, I was stronger, I could defeat more monsters.

But, the one who defeated the Demon Lord was Renji-nicchan and it was also Renji-nicchan that dealt the final blow to the Demon God as well.

Everytime we were cornered, Renji-niichan was the first one to stand at the very front.

Everytime we wished for someone to save us, Renji-niichan was the first one to run to help us.

“I hope Renji-niichan’s is healthy and safe.”(souichi)

Though the journey was harsh, it was fun because everyone was together.

This world is a different world and we could trust the 13 of summoned together the most.

There are many who are good towards us or get along with us but I guess you can still trust the ones from your own world the most.

That's why I want to be with Renji-niichan. I want to talk to him.

I call him niichan but he feels more like a father to me. That's why, I want to meet him and be with him.

My reason is obviously different than Aya or Yuuko-san but I want to meet Renji-san as well.

But Renji-niichan is going around villages resolving troublesome things.

With Er-san on his side, I could imagine him defeating groups of Ogres and Goblins which can't be matched by normal adventurers.

I think it really suits him.

It's not like the Holy Sword that I received from the Goddess.

A weapon only to kill the Demon God. That beautiful jewel-like weapon. A weapon not to protect someone, but to simply to kill Gods. And the person who wished to save and protect people with that weapon.

That back, we kept chasing after it forever. And finally, we stand here, where we are now.

That's why—-

"I really want to see him again."

Taking out a copper coin from my pocket, I flicked it with *ping* sound.

The coin didn't rotate properly and I panicked to catch it so that I don't drop it.

Renji-niichan's habit.

Since he always flicked Er-san like that, I tried to mimic him. But, I can't do it well. Aya always laughs at me for it. That it doesn't suit me.

But, I'm not Renji-niichan, neither do I want to become like him.

That's why I only try to mimic him.

So that I can persevere and do my best like him. So that I can move forward and become a man on whom people can rely on.

I am called a Brave, and possess the Holy Sword of the Goddess but that's it.

The Goddess pleaded all of us to save this world but the one that Goddess holds the dearest is Renji-niichan.

That Goddess should be looking over Renji-niichan all the time.

That's why I want to meet him as well.

If we can meet him, Aya would also be definitely happy.

Both me and Yayoi would be happy as well but Aya would be much more delighted.

"I wonder if he'll come and watch the combat competition in Royal Capital."

In 2 months time, a once in a year giant festival shall take place in the royal capital.

The test to compete in that will also end soon.

I will also take part. Or rather, I was requested to take part in it.

——I wonder if Renji-niichan would also take part. I guess not, I smiled wryly.

He hates standing out after all.

But, I’m looking forward to it slightly. 5 people will take part from this magic academy.

Me and Aya, the rest of the 3 are yet to be decided. That’s because not every student has returned as of yet.

Actually only one is remaining. A senpai who’s late so it’s become a bit of a topic.

Francesca Barton senpai. I have seen her once, she’s a really amazing beauty.

Will she return, or will the exam period end earlier?

2 days remain till the end of the examination period.

Chapter 12 Hero and the City of Magicians

As we walked leisurely on the highway, the outer walls of the magic city finally became visible.

Finally feeling relaxed, the girl walking behind me exhaled deeply.

[Finally, we're here eh?]

"Don't say it like that. She's also trying her best."

The travellers coming from the Magic city looked at me dubiously as I talked to myself. But soon their gazes would turn towards Miss Francesca walking behind me.

"Are you fine?"(traveller)

"Eh, yes, I'm fine. Thank you for worrying about me."(fran)

I doubt they were acquaintances yet they were worrying for her.

It took 10 days to get here. Sleeping outdoors at nights and walking all the time during the day. We did get to stop at inns twice during the journey but the fatigue won't disappear just by sleeping on a comfy bed once.

Her stamina should be at her limits already.

She’s still walking somehow but her legs are slow.

While talking with the passing by travellers, she’d take a rest by stopping her legs.

[You could have at least carried her luggage for her.]

Don’t say that. I lightly struck Ermenhilde inside my pocket.

If she’s an adventurer, she’ll have to learn to handle her own things.

After the travellers went away, Miss Francesca also began to walk again.

“Just a little bit more. Stay strong.”(renji)

“Yes.”

Saying that, I also began to walk.

This girl is also very patient. During the 10 days we walked from that village to the Magic City, she didn’t complain even once.

Her pace started getting slower and slower day by day but she didn’t say anything like ‘take my luggage’ or ‘let’s take a rest’ even once.

At times her smile seemed to get clouded and sometimes distorted due to pain but that only made her look more favourable.

“Was the journey hard?”(renji)

Lining alongside her who was walking shakily, I asked.

Maybe she didn’t expect me talk to her, she looked at me with a hazy expression.

Her that stuck to her forehead due to sweat only made her look strangely erotic.

Am I also tired from the long journey? I shrugged my shoulders.

“This is the first time ever you’ve walked this much, right?”(renji)

“Yes. It is the first time.”(fran)

But for some reason, she laughed happily.

Understanding her reason somewhat, I also became slightly happy.

Journeying with an objective. Completing that objective. You start to feel the connection between people. You start to greet random travellers, adventurers while walking.

That's something which has faded away in the modern world that's why I love travelling in this different world which makes me feel like that.

Maybe, Miss Francesca also began to like journeying for the same reason.

Thinking that, I also became happy.

I guess, I'm also still young.

[You sure are getting along……..]

"Is that so?"(renji)

It seems Ermenhilde-san's mood isn't very good for some reason.

It's probably sulking because I'm talking to Miss Francesca.

Since it happens sometimes, I decided to leave it be. If I was alone with no one around it'd be fine but this is the highway near the Magic City and Miss Francesca was right beside me.

There were a lot of people around.

If I talked happily to a medal here, I'll only be seen as a retard.

No, I might be treated as some dangerous individual as well.

“Well, as long as you gained some good memories, it’s fine.”(Renji)

“Yes!”(fran)

She looked at me with a wide smile this time.

That expression is really not fair. For a beauty like her to look at me with that kind of smile, I really think she’s too defenceless.

It’s not an expression you show to a man you started travelling recently. There’ll definitely be misunderstandings.

Getting a bit embarrassed, I shifted my gaze towards the Magic City in front of me.

Magic City Oufan.

As it name suggests, it’s a city filled with magicians who pursue magic, magic items and other similar techniques.

It’s one of the 4 major cities on the Imnesia continent.

Surrounded by huge walls, one would have to pass through one of the 4 gates under constant surveillance by soldiers in order to get in and out of the city.

To the east from here is the Royal Capital and further east of that is the Tactics City.

To the north of the Royal Capital is the Commercial Sciences City and to the south is the Steelworks City.

The Imnesia continent was made by the Roayl Capital in the centre, the 4 major cities in each direction and further branching countless villages.

Around the Commercial Sciences City, not just villages, but several well developed towns are also located.

I haven't gone that side much though so I'm not very clear about it.

"I had always admired what is called as a 'journey'."(fran)

"It's pretty common among nobles."(renji)

[That's true. Nobles wanting to be adventurers are filled with so much admiration and aspirations that it gets troublesome.]

I was not going to say that much though. I ended up smiling wryly.

We crossed many noble adventurers but they were all people who didn't understand anything about being an adventurer.

Even though they were in the protection of their parents till now, they suddenly begin to travel the world without anything to try and make a living.

Well, without any aspirations, no one would try to become an adventurer either though, I think.

We were also the same. After getting summoned to this world, being made to fight something like a Demon God, but somewhere inside, we were still kind of happy.

A different world where we knew nothing. In the fights with monsters, even the quality of food was several levels below the current society.

At that time, it's amazing we actually accepted something so dangerous like subjugating the Demon God. Even if it was this world's goddess that asked us of it.

In that sense, the nobles who knew of this world better than us could be considered to have become adventurers with a much better reason.

There are those who become adventurers simply because they won't be succeeding their house as well.

"The world of adventurers is one where you won't move forward with just admiration alone."(renji)

"Yes. I have learnt that perfectly well in the past 1 month."(fran)

Saying that, Miss Francesca shrugged her shoulders while fixing her posture and luggage.

Seeing her actions that had become more adventurer-like than before, I laughed slightly.

“But still, I really had fun. In this adventure.”(Fran)

“haha—-Something like this is still faraway from an actual adventure.”(renji)

This girl had only seen a remote rural area.

Attacked by goblins, subjugating Orcs, and had simply walked back to the Magic academy.

That’s still nowhere near an actual adventure.

Elfreim, where the demi-humans live.

Abenelm, where the demons live.

Elves, dwarves, beastmen, fairies, spirits and many other races.

Demons and the Demon Lord and giant and strong monsters that don’t live on this continent.

Golems as big as small mountains, demonic beasts. Serpents and krakens that can sink ships. Griffons and Dragons that rule the skies.

And—-the Demon God.

“An adventure is to risk life and death.”(renji)

“fufu—-I had my hands full with just goblins though.”(fran)

“Well, that’s true.”(renji)

Normally, it is like that.

A single goblin would be a threat for a villager. That’s how dangerous this world is.

But I think, exactly because it is such a world, the bonds between people are strong and every day you feel truly alive and even walking like this while journeying seems so much fun.

Passing through strangers on the highway. Since the population of this world is not very high, you don’t meet too many people either. In a place like Tokyo, nobody can imagine how many hundreds of people pass through you in a matter of seconds.

But even though there are so many people, how many of them would actually greet you?

Calling a random stranger, how many would reply with a smile rather than a suspicious gaze?

Cars, trains, airplanes.

They’re convenient but we know how the world turns out due to pursuing too much convenience.

And, exactly because this world isn’t that convenient, the bonds between people are this strong. This world feels much warmer exactly because of that.

Maybe that’s why———-we chose this world.

It’s not convenient. There’s no internet nor any telephones.

It hurts when you get injured and you could die just because of slight negligence.

Even then, this world felt fascinating. Even though the danger to life was always by our side, still we thought of this world as much better.

“If it’s Miss Francesca, goblins would soon be of no threat to you.”(renji)

“Is that so?”(fran)

“Probably.”

“…….you’re supposed to say ‘absolutely’ or any other such word there……”

I looked away from Miss Francesca who was grumbling and looked to the front.

The gate to the city was in front of us.

There was an inspection for entering and about 10 people were standing and waiting for their turn to come. Everyone had to pass through it. Well, we shouldn’t have any problem.

Joining the line, I sighed.

“With this, we’ll finally be done eh?”(renji)

“Sorry for all the trouble.”(fran)

Even though she had been tired till now, she’s laughing energetically now.

Our destination——or rather, she must have felt relaxed to have reached the place where she lives.

“Well, it is my job after all.”(renji)

[You’re not being honest.]

Saying that, I shrugged my shoulders.

“Job, is it?……..”(fran)

Ermenhilde’s fed up voice and Miss Francesca’s slightly sad voice.

But, I had no other way to describe it. Job, request. All that’s left is to get my reward.

I don’t hate nobles but I don’t really want to get involved with them either.

I simply want to leisurely live as an adventurer in this world. For now, at least.

I don’t want to involve myself in troublesome things.

That’s why——

“Yes, job. Well, I had fun with my job since the other party was a beauty though.”(renji)

“…….Mouu”

Miss Francesca blushed at being called a beauty.

She really is cute.

[You’re making a sloppy face.]

“Well, I was born with it.”

As I sighed, I lightly hit Ermenhilde inside my pocket with my finger.

Seriously……my partner is such a smooth-talker.

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The Magic City had changed quite a bit since the time I last visited.

We had stopped quite a bit of times during our journey to subjugate the Demon God but at that time the city felt less energetic and also had less people, I think.

Also, there were lesser demi-humans and beastmen back then as well.

But now, the main street was filled with lots of people, the stores and stalls were lively, and there were many different species other than humans walking down the street as well.

Unlike a rural village, I felt overwhelmed from the lines of stone-made houses and buildings along the streets.

.....I must have gotten a bit too used to the atmosphere of a village.

And, the ones walking on the street were Elves, famous for hating humans.

Fairies, with a total size of about 10cm.

Beastmen, whose some part of the body was similar to some animal.

After the Demon God had been killed, the differences between the various races had also been resolved somewhat.

Also, the threat to this world——the threat of monsters had not been removed either as of yet.

With the subjugation of the Demon God as a chance, they must have begun to compromise with each other slowly.

I slightly felt regret the fact that for the past half-year, I had been moving around only rural villages.

…….but, there are many beastmen in a human city. And they're laughing. Walking alongside humans. To be able to see this scene, I feel that there really was a meaning behind our journey. I laughed that it wasn't useless.

"In the time I didn't visit, it really has changed."(renji)

[You're talking like a country bumpkin now.]

"Well, I did spend most of the time in villages recently."

Saying that, I shrugged my shoulders.

But, leaving aside beastmen, for even elves and fairies to be here, I'm surprised.

As I looked around the surroundings, I really did look completely like a country bumpkin. I couldn't refute that fact no matter what. Even my clothes matched that.

As the surrounding gazes focused on me for a second, I became embarrassed and stopped surveying everything.

"I'll return to Albana Magic Academy for now but what will Renji-sama do?"(fran)

"nn…….for the time being, I'll just find a random inn and rest, I guess?"(renji)

While looking at the crowd, I replied so.

Well I did come all the way to Magic Academy after all, it'll be a waste to leave already.

My wallet is filled as well. It won't be bad to think of the next journey while eating delicious meal with alcohol.

Also, I need to talk about the black Orc as well.

Though I don't want to bring too much trouble for Souichi and other who are comfortably living as students either. I did have such adult-like or rather, guardian-like thinking as well for once.

In the worst case, it'll end up with asking them for help but I do want children to live as children.

It's an adults job to take care of troublesome things……even if it ends in failure.

While thinking that, I guess I really have to show up at the Royal Capital. Utano-san…….is like 'that' so I should at least meet Toudou for once.

I also need to think about the journey as well——

"Well, I'd be in Oufan for the time being. If anything happens, bring a

request to the guild.”(renji)

For the time being. I won’t stay here very long though.

When I said that, her expression suddenly became very bright.

“Which inn will you be…….”(fran)

“Well, it’ll be some cheap inn somewhere. As usual.”(renji)

[I want to sleep on a better bed for once.]

The quality of bed doesn’t even matter to you. I don’t know whether you’re a metal or not but you’re still a medal.

As I gave tsukkomi inside my mind, I shrugged. My partner medal really acts like a human sometimes.

I’m not really the type to fuss about the inn. As long as it’s cheap and can prepare meals, I’m good with it. It’s such a big city, there should be some inn with a bar as well.

“Then, we might meet again as well.”(fran)

“that’s true. Well, if there’s a chance, let’s meet again.”(renji)

Saying that, we parted. That’s all there was. There were no any lingering

attachments.

I don’t have a stiff thinking like it was a once-in-a-lifetime encounter or something. I took a job and got my reward. We met, parted and might meet again.

Since we’re both in the city, there’s a chance we’d meet again.

Even after I leave this city, we might meet again if she continues to live as an adventurer.

Like I said before, she might request another job as well.

The world is vast but the bonds between people don’t disappear that easily.

That’s the kind of world—-this world is.

“In the end, nothing happened.”(renji)

[Don’t you hate trouble? Aren’t you happy?”]

On hearing that, I could only shrug my shoulders again.

“Well, troublesome things don’t happen that easily, I guess?”

[A trouble would be trouble only if you get involved in it but if you

don’t, it’s only someone else’s problem after all.]

“That’s true as well.”

I agree with that.

And, I don’t have the hobby of getting close to other people’s problems. It’s a different thing if I’m getting a reward though.

For the time being I want to enjoy some luxury while wallet is still fat.

[So? Where are we heading?]

“A place which has both inn and a bar.”

I think I heard a sigh from inside my pocket but it was probably just my imagination.

Interlude 3 The Girl's Day (2)

What kind of person do you think Renji Yamada is?

If you'd ask 10 people, all 10 of them would answer – [A Hero]. The ultimate Hero. Saviour. One of the 13 God Slayers summoned from another world to save this world.

Black haired and black eyed like all others from the other world, he had an excellent personality and never abandoned those in need.

Likes children, and it is said that he looked after all the other heroes that were in their teens when they were summoned.

The royalty trusted him a lot, and it was popular belief that it was him that helped strengthen the bonds with the Elfreim continent where a different race lived.

There were even rumours that the Priests that were directly gifted by their God, the Spirit God, held feelings more than just trust for him as well.

The hero who was entrusted with the [Gift], the Goddess' sword [Ermenhilde], by the Goddess Astraera.

He was skilled with the sword and combat, and above all he was diligent and modest as well.

It is said that he trained everyday before their journey started so that he could become as strong as possible.

The commander of the 1st Order of Knights of the Imnesia kingdom, the man called as the strongest knight, O'brien and his rival and friend, the commander of the 3rd Order of Knights, Cerbelie, both of them had been astonished by his level of diligence and his speed of growth.

Even in terms of knowledge, along with the GodSlayer known as the [Sage] [Witch], Yuuko Utano, he had had read all of the books in the royal castle which was an undeniable fact.

Everyone would say that he put in more effort in both training and studies more than normal.

There were even those who said that the true Brave one was Renji Yamada and not Souichi Amagi who later on received the Holy Sword of the Goddess and was called as the [Brave].

He was the one who walked in front of the other 12 God Slayer, showed them the way, and continued fighting.

Refusing to surrender, getting rid of the despair; the bards sing that even the Demon God was afraid of his attitude.

In truth, he fought one-on-one with the Demon God that had surpassed human understanding and some say that he even made the Demon God retreat.

He did not fear the Demon Lord, he did not fear the Dragon, he was the Hero that crossed swords with the Demon God and finally killed him.

Even as a God Slayer, he received the affection of the Goddess and was the one who received the highest level of Divine Protection from her.

With the jade-coloured Divine Sword in his hands, protected by the divine protection of the Goddess, he is the great Hero who saved the world.

And, after the Demon God was subjugated———he hid his whereabouts.

Many say that he returned to his old world, or that he is still fighting the armies of the Demons or that he’s now living happily with the goddess.

The Royal Family had hid the truth and had not been told to anyone.

The bards sung about various endings but the truth was still unknown.

The only ones who knew the truth were royal family, some of the nobles, and the remaining 12 God Slayers——.

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It has been three days since I, Francesca Barton, returned to the Albana Magic Academy.

My journey with Renji Yamada-sama. He taught me the basics of journeying and even helped me with completing my task.

The journey had only lasted 2 weeks but these 2 weeks were definitely the most shocking time of my life.

Hero. One of the 13 summoned from another world to kill the Demon God. The God Slayers.

I still can’t believe how social, and easy to talk to he was.

I always thought that he’d be more formal and strict type of person.

And also, he was very strong. Let alone Goblins, he wasn’t afraid of even more than 10 Orcs. I still remember his back as he faced them bravely.

The moment when Renji-sama killed the Orc that could use magic, he really felt like a hero from the fairy tales.

Black Flames that seemed like they could burn up even the soul. I, who had been captured by the Orc. And Renji-sama stood in the way of those flames to protect me.

In his hands was the jade green Divine sword of the Goddess, [Ermenhilde]. He had obliterated that magic with simply the magical energy being released from him.

I had travelled with that Renji-sama and had completed my test.

……..and there was a slight change in my school life.

“Good morning.”

Giving a greeting, I entered the classroom.

Ancient and honourable school is good and all but the old-fashioned sliding door really makes a loud sound on being opened.

Due to that, the classmates talking in loud voices suddenly focused towards me.

“Go, good morning……”

Getting a bit surprised, I gave a greeting once again.

My cramped voice…….didn’t really come out properly. My heartbeat grew faster a bit I think.

While I wondered if someone would say something, everyone’s gazes soon turned away from me.

Breathing a sigh in relief, I entered the classroom.

Some of my close classmates greeted me and I greeted them back.

“Say, Francesca-san.”

“What is it?”

As I sat on my seat, one of my close classmates called to me.

Yesterday I hadn’t been able to answer properly due to muscular pains but I have calmed down a bit today.

Some parts of my body still hurt here and there but I answered with a smile.

“That…..the test this time, is it true that you took it along with Yamada-sama?”

“Eh, ah, yes.”

The change in the gazes of my classmates.

That change was because of the fact that I had travelled with Renji Yamada-sama, one of Heroes.

That topic had soon spread all over the school.

I had pleaded the teachers to not reveal it too much because Renji-sama, for some reason, had told me that he didn't want to stand out too much.

……but it ended up spreading in the end though. Is this my fault? I should not have revealed his name so easily.

The details of my test. The subjugation of Orcs.

There was no problem there. I did succeed. But the number was 10 of them. Along with a new species that could use magic. There was no way that teachers would have believed me.

They didn't say that lying but they persistently asked how I had taken down so many of them.

On being asked, I ended up telling them about Renji-sama as well. I had even ended up telling them about Ermenhilde-sama…….yeah, this is my fault.

I hope this doesn't turn into a serious matter but my stomach hurts a bit. I owe him for saving me and helping me.

I really don't want to cause any trouble for him……haah.

"I was saved by Renji-sama."(fran)

“Then that rumour was true?!?”

“Eh, yes……though I don’t know what kind of rumour is going around.”

The classmate raised her voice happily. Due to that, once again the gazes of my classmates focused here. This is embarrassing.

Any information about Renji Yamada-sama was scarce. His name, appearance and personality———other than that nothing else was known from the past 1 year.

No other information about him had appeared. Neither to villagers nor to the nobles.

There were rumours that he alone had gone back to his own world, or that he was giving burial to the loves ones he had lost during the journey, or that her was living happily with the Goddess.

But in truth, it seems he had simply continued journeying.

Any info regarding such a Hero would definitely become a huge topic in the school.

I had been saved since I was having muscular pains yesterday but I have been asked the same thing countless times from the morning, even at the dorm.

About Renji-sama. His personality, what things he liked, things he hated, what had he been doing till now.

In just two weeks, there was no way I'd learn so much about him though. But I couldn't answer something randomly so I had to tell them truthfully that I knew nothing.

It's really true but……one guy even said that I was monopolising the info about Renji-sama.

Even though, I myself want to know such things.

"He was a sociable guy. During our journey, he took care of me as well after all."(fran)

"Isn't that because Francesca-san is a beauty?"

"……I doubt that's it though."

I had no idea how to reply to that so I could only give a wry smile.

It was a fact that during our journey, or while sleeping outdoors, I did feel Renji-sama's gaze at times.

But, he never laid his hands on me, in fact his presence alone made me feel safe.

Was that what you'd call a natural virtue or was I simply too softhearted, I don't know.

But remembering him calling me a beauty, my heart beat grew a bit faster.

Well, from Renji-sama's point of view, it was either a joke or he was making fun of me.

"Can you tell me more about your journey later?"

"Umm——-"(fran)

I was at a loss for words but the teacher, a middle-aged woman, came into the class at a perfect time.

"The teacher is here."(fran)

"Oh…..then, see you later."

I didn't know whether to consider myself lucky or to sigh at the fact that this conversation will continue.

For some reason, Renji-sama didn't like being called and treated as a Hero.

Even after subjugating the Orcs, he gave all the credit to me and he

himself had been satisfied and happy with just drinking some alcohol.

Even though he's so much more amazing than someone like me, but everytime I said that, he'd laugh and say that it wasn't like that.

I think he's just being modest.

He doesn't boast at all and was always worried for me instead.

And, even I'm not an idiot. I may be ignorant of worldly matters but it's not like I know nothing at all.

14 Orcs.

The expense incurred in killing them is not a few a gold coins.

One-by-one might not be that difficult but for facing more than 10 Orcs at the same time, there was a need for the Knight Orders to take action.

The expenses for that won't ever be just a few gold coins. There's a chance that the reward alone would be in silver coins.

But even then, Renji-sama only asked for 4 gold coins total. Even selling those Orcs would have gotten him double that amount.

I'm sure he probably realized that the villagers won't be able to pay him that much but still, the amount he asked for was especially less.

And, half of it had been given to me who was basically useless.

He even taught me how to fight and how to use my magic. Let alone being of use to him, I had ended up getting caught due to lowering my guard, but still I had received half of the reward.

It was my first income that I earned as an adventurer, that too along with the Hero Renji-sama.

Those two gold coins have become my treasure now. It’s really precious to me.

The Academy had apologised for not being able to arrange proper adventurers for my help but now I’m actually thankful for that.

Thanks to that, I was able to experience something irreplaceable.

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And there was another change in my academy life.

That was, after the classes ended.

“Francesca-senpai!”

“Hello Souichi-kun. Thank you for coming to the class.”(fran)

“No, please don’t mind it.”

“No need to be so formal towards me.”(fran)

The class became noisy.

That was not because the classes had ended. It was because the [Brave] had come to their class.

The fact that I had travelled and taken a request along with Renji-sama had of course reached the ears of the [God Slayers] Souichi-kun, Yayoi-san and Aya-san.

They come to me instantly and asked about Renji-san.

“Hello to Yayoi-san as well.”(fran)

“Yes, hello Francesca-senpai.”

Souichi-kun and Yayoi-san. Souichi-kun wasn’t very tall and Yayoi-san was tall for a girl, so together they seemed like twins. As a man and a woman they had differences but if they were to wear the same

clothes.....won't it be difficult to recognise who's who?

These two were brother and sister and really got along well. Since they had similar appearance, Souichi-san would look very similar to Yayoi-san if he grew out his hair.

I also had two elder sisters but I couldn't really say that we got along well.

Or rather, we don't really interfere with each other's lives.

The eldest sister who'll inherit the house, the middle sister who has business skills and so our parents have a lot of expectation from her, and then there's me who has a meagre talent in magic.

After graduating, I'll probably have to marry some noble or some famous merchant family.

Then, at least till that time, I decided to live as freely as possible so I came to the Magic Academy. I know that I have asked for a big favour from my family.

They didn't say it out loud but I'm sure that they'd have wanted me to have a more safe school life.

After coming to this school, I have only been able to visit my home at the bare minimum.

Once in a month, a letter from my parents would come so I think I might be making them worry for me. Though the contents of the letters are always – come back soon or about marriage interviews *etc*.

Since it's a bit awkward at my own home, I feel happy on seeing them both like this.

"Aya-san didn't come together today?"(fran)

"Aya, she went to the guild today to put in a request……"(souichi)

"Aya-san did?"

Souichi-kun said that while inkling his head to a side, as if troubled.

Aya Fuyou-san. She is another one of the [God Slayers] in the school and is a famous magician with the title of [Grand Magus].

Honestly speaking, I have no idea why an amazing magician like Aya-san would attend school now.

It's a fact that Aya-san is actually more skilled than even the teachers at this school. She is talented enough to even decipher sealed magic grimoires.

Even the teachers are worried about how to handle her, and it's become a situation where they can't say anything no matter what she does.

She herself isn't a bad person but due to her abilities and titles, she ahs been unable to make friends of her own age.

Even with skills and experience, teachers would still look down upon youngsters, which is one of the bad aspects of this school. So even among the teachers, there were many who hate—-well, not that much but still there were many who didn't really like her.

But it was a fact that she had the skills. And along with the title of [God Slayer], there was no one who could say anything to her.

Also, it was the royal family that recommended entering her into the school. There was no way anyone would cause any trouble with her.

But still, I couldn't understand why the [Grand Magus] would go as far as to request something from the guild.

A magician of my level has no choice but to depend on someone but if it's her, she could do anything, is what I think.

"Well, when we asked about Renji-niichan from you, Francesca-senpai, you said that you had requested him to take the request from the guild right?"(souichi)

"Eh, yes. That's true."(fran)

"So, Aya-chan has been putting up requests at the guild from yesterday so that she can catch Renji-niichan."

“I see.”

Somehow, she’s really cute.

Aya-san gives an image of a strong-willed person.

Slanting eyes, and always walks around proudly, and also keeps on shouting at Souichi-kun always……

Probably, it’s something normal for them and they’re just being playful I think.

But even so, to be like that inside the school, she really gives an image of strong willed person.

And she is currently going to the guild after classes just so she could meet Renji-san.

The Magic City Ofan has many districts/areas.

The Noble district where nobles live.

The commerce district where merchants put up there shops.

The academy district where the magic schools and Alchemy workshops are located.

The pleasure district where inns, bars and other places for enjoyment are located.

These four are the major ones.

There's a lot of distance between the commerce district where the guild is and our Albana academy which is in the academy district.

Going there after classes means that it'll be really late time.

But even so, Aya-san went so that she could meet him, we could only smile wryly at that.

"Just like Francesca-senpai had told, Aya-chan actually put up a proper request for gathering medicinal herbs."(souichi)

"Somehow, she really is cute. I thought she was more strong willed type of person."(fran)

"No…….she really is a bit to strong minded…."(souichi)

As Souichi muttered that in a tired tone, I smiled wryly. Yayoi-san also looked at Souichi-kun with a worried expression.

For her elder brother to being unable to match a woman, as a younger sister she really might have things to say.

This was another one of the changes to my school life.

Due to the topic of Renji-sama, I was able to become friends with Souichi-kun and other [God Slayers].

“Cut is that fine? Coming just to talk to me, you don’t have anything else to do?”(fran)

“haha……everyone says that but neither me nor Yayoi have anything special to do.”(souichi)

“Is that so?”(fran)

“Yes. Both me and Onii-chan are normal students for now after all.”(yayoi)

Normal students, for now.

Those words that left Yayoi-san’s mouth naturally showed their status.

Souichi-kun, Yayoi-san, Aya-san.

Even though they are all younger than me, those three are bearing the heavy burden as God Slayers and as devout heroes.

And Renji-sama——-I remembered him saying that he wasn’t a hero.

Hero. That title was very heavy. Much more than what I think.

While being surrounded by gazes full of admiration and inquisitiveness, still Souichi-kun and others continued their lifestyle as normal students.

Other Heroes were all working for the country in some way or the other.

Renji-sama. He alone, without the support of the country, without the fame of a God Slayer——was going around saving people he didn't know at all while roaming from village to village.

For a reward that'd be small for even an adventurer, he saved a noble like me who knew nothing.

I heard from Souichi-kun and others but it seems that he'd been living like that for the whole past 1 year.

I wonder who could actually do that.

Even though one could live without any troubles if he worked for the country as a hero. But rejecting that, he went around saving villages in rural areas.

That truly was the life style of a genuine [Hero]. That's why Souichi-kun and others laughed happily and proudly when I talked about Renji-sama.

"For now, is it?"(fran)

“Yes, for now.”(yayoi)

Saying that, both Souichi-kun and Yayoi-san laughed.

It was a smile fitting their ages and didn’t one feel the burden as a hero and a god slayer they were carrying. Even I felt happy.

It was such a smile.

“Soon, there’ll be the last selection for the fighting competition so I’m free till then.”(souichi)

“Oh, right…….”(fran)

“Francesca-senpai, you should also give your best.”(yayoi)

“Thank you very much Yayoi-san.”

The last selection for the fighting competition. Only 5 will be chose. 2 have already been decided.

With a little more effort, I could also get selected as a participant. If I could fight alongside those 2, I’ll finally have a definite meaning for coming to this school.

Born as a noble, I had a duty to live as a noble as well. I have no

objections to that since I think the same.

But, I want to leave with something tangible. Not as the noble Francesca Barton but as an adventurer and as a student of Albana Magic Academy.

That's why I had not realized it yet.

The fact that I got close to these 3 [God Slayers].

The fact that I had travelled with the Hero Renji Yamada, and had defeated Orcs with him.

The meaning behind it and just how would that be looked upon.

Chapter 13 Hero and the City of Magicians (2)

As I stepped outside the thick forest, I could suddenly see the wide blue sky as if the world itself had changed.

Since the sun was bright, I covered my eyes with my hand and slightly squinted due to the light. Maybe because my action felt somewhat funny, the handsome young man that took the request with me slightly loosened his cheeks.

Thought it was just that, his smile also suddenly felt as bright as the shining sun.

So this is what an actual handsome man is like, I sighed inside my mind. I wonder if this was jealousy I felt.

But still, even though his gender was the same, I still felt that he looked beautiful.

“Thanks for guiding me around the forest. If something happens, I’ll be counting on you again.”(renji)

“I’m just happy to have found a human that also treats forests preciously as well.”

On his flowing golden hair was a plain circlet with a jade embedded in the centre.

Every time the wind blew slightly, his golden hair flew around and it felt as if my whole vision had been covered with gold.

Blonde hair and blue eyes. A well-featured appearance and tall height. Wearing green clothes from head to toe, he also wore a deep wooden coloured mantle to help him slip into the forest.

And above all, the most striking feature were his pointed ears.

Elf. The protectors of the forest, as called by the country of Spirits. An Elf, who supposedly hate humans, was standing in front of me and smiling.

Even though he's a guy, his smile still slightly raised my heartbeat. Even though I'm normal and like only women.

"Treating forests preciously or whatever, I don't really know about that. I simply want to avoid damaging the area in my own way."(renji)

"That alone is enough. Humans and Dwarves, cut down forests more than required but you are different."

"Well, I wonder. I don't think my any different from a normal human though."(renji)

Saying that, I shrugged my shoulders.

Elves hate humans. That was common sense in society. Even I think it's

like that. And in fact, we never really had any kind of conversation even after taking the request at first.

There are many theories as to why Elves hate humans but I think it's because humans cut down a lot of trees.

Even if they don't cut trees there were many vast plains. Considering Imnesia's population, there'd be no problem in finding places to live.

But even then, humans would cut down forests and expand their own territory.

Animals are chased out of their homes, the ecosystem collapses, and the resentment gives birth to monsters.

Cleared away forests become turned into distorted territories of monsters. The maddened forests become a living place for monsters. These habitats of monsters further invite more monsters and the weak monsters become prey to the stronger ones. And this leads to the birth of an even more powerful monster.

That's the complaint Elves have been giving. That it was the humans and the Dwarves that were giving birth to more and more monsters.

The excuse from humans was that trees/wood is a necessary ingredient in building houses, is used as a fuel and is also required in making daily necessities like furniture *etc*.

Though iron manufacturing was pretty high levelled here, it still needed

fire to be made use of which comes from wood. After all, there are no scientific fuels in this different world.

Wood was something that was absolutely needed in the daily life of humans.

Both sides' opinion could be said to correct. That's why, even now Elves and Humans maintained a certain distance between them.

That gap was not something I could fill up, and neither do I feel like doing something like that. Humans and Elves. Restoring and mending relationships between different races was the job of the royalty.

"But well, it'd be nice if they could at least individually get along sometimes."(renji)

"Well I wonder about that. Even I am not really friendly with humans after all."

"That's fine."

There's a skill to getting along with someone.

What should one do to get someone you hate to work with you? There may be no correct answer to that but you can't say that every method is wrong either.

In my case, I think I try to make the other person interested in the

individual called Yamada Renji as a single person. The only reason why Elves and Humans hate each other is because they simply don't try to understand each other, I think.

And true enough, I barely know anything about this elf beside me. I only know what I've read in books and what I've heard from other people.

Elves are called as the people of the forest and treasure nature above all.

But the truth might not be exactly what the books say. But to be called as the people of the forest, it's clear that they hold much more interest and love for forests than humans do.

For example, the way of walking in the forest. I don't know which way is correct but I at least try to be careful to not step on roots or greenery.

I try to focus on walking on bare ground or weeds as much as I can.

For example, the way of defeating goblins. So that their blood doesn't contaminate nature, use bare hands instead of knives, that too, use surprise attacks to finish them with a single blow on their necks.

In time, their corpses will return to the earth and become food for the animals in the forest. But the equipment worn by these goblins is different.

So, I took them off and recovered. Well, I plan to sell it after reaching the city though. It's an important source of my income after all.

Ermenhilde called me a [Bandit] and whatnot but it's for money.

After I did all that, the elf took some interest in me. In what I was doing. Well, from an Elf's point of view I might have seemed like some eccentric……well, anyone would see me as an eccentric, I think. Ermenhilde sighed who knows how many times due to that.

After gaining his interest, I explained my actions and then explained that I was also interested in an Elf's sense of values.

When I told that I was interested, the other party would also automatically generate some kind of interest in me.

"I'll be happy if humans like you who treat forests preciously would increase."

"Me too. Nature is meant to be cherished."

And, never deprecate something the other party holds dear.

For an Elf, it's nature. For a Dwarf, it's earth, and his smithy.

Anyone would be irritated if someone were to speak badly of something you hold dear. As long as you can abide by that rule, you'll automatically gain the goodwill of the other person.

That's how you socialise with someone.

Be ready to compromise somewhat. Be the one who starts a conversation once. Be the one to extend your hand. It's something very obvious.

"Then, human. If it's in our fates, let us take a job together again."

"Yeah, I'll be counting on you at that time once more."(renji)

Saying that, the handsome elf returned back into the forest.

The objective was to subjugate goblins inside the forest.

Mine was to collect materials for alchemy inside the forest.

Doing both the requests together, today's earnings should be pretty great.

My mood became better. After I confirmed that the Elf had disappeared deep into the forest, I breathed a sigh.

[Rather than being over considerate towards others, won't it be fine if you simply stay indifferent?]

"That'll be even more tiring. Journeying together without any conversation would be hell."

[Renji, you have me don't you?]

"If I talked with you in front of other, people will treat me as a retard."

[……..muu]

When I said that, Ermenhilde was unable to say anything back.

"It's fun talking with you. But, it's not cool to get the cold shoulder from others."

[Then just make it so that everyone can hear me——]

"Not happening. I'll stand out to much. Too much trouble."

[So that's the actual reason eh……..]

I shouldered the bag filled with the requested ingredients and the equipments of the goblins.

Inside my pocket were numerous fangs that'll be the proof of subjugation.

Now then, how much will I earn today? The iron armour etc are pretty heavy but it's more fun to think about the money.

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“As expected, you earn much more in a city eh?”(renji)

[.....I wonder why I feel like crying.]

It seems Ermenhilde is still not happy of the fact that I was took armour from goblins. While ignoring Ermenhilde’s voice, I sat down on one of the provided chairs in the guild and took a look at the memos in which requests were written.

Today’s earnings have been 35 copper coins. It’s an amount that won’t appear in a rural village’s guild. Cities sure are nice, really.

Well, if you properly subjugate monsters, you can earn at least 1 gold coin everyday. But it’s super tiring so I won’t.

Thinking that, I once again felt that adventurer really is a profitable job. It showed why this occupation won’t die out even though there’s a constant threat to the life of the person.

“I want to keep on earning like this for some time.”

[I want to kill more monsters if possible.]

You’re too violent, partner. Lightly hitting Ermenhilde inside my pocket, I turned the pages of the memos.

I’m looking for an ingredient collecting job with a good reward.

Since this is the Magic City, there were many ingredient gathering requests for magical experiments that stood out but there’s also danger involved in them as well. If only they were something easy like gathering herbs. I sighed.

The ingredients used in magical experiments were mostly things that possessed magical energy inside them. That too, the quantity alone wasn’t important, the purity of magical energy was also important apparently. Though, I’m not really knowledgeable in that aspect.

In the first place, I’m bad with things like alchemy and modern science experiments. Rather than thinking too much while sitting in front of a desk with a flask, I prefer to go and move around my body. But, I’m not a muscle-headed idiot, I think. I want to think that way at least.

By the way, the ingredients I gathered today is called spirit grass.

It wasn’t some normal grass that was used to make ointments etc but could actually restore magical energy if boiled and drunk so it was wanted as an ingredient for alchemy.

These miraculous things grow in sacred grounds——or rather, the so called power spots.

True the rewards are nice but in such places monsters are strong as well. Maybe because they are feeding on such herbs or maybe it's simply because of staying in such power spots, these monsters are strong and tough. Sometimes there are even some which have huge bodies. If I were to speak in game terminology, even a goblin would be of a much higher level.

So it was obvious that the reward was high. That's why I was looking for requests that were safe yet gave good rewards.

"Which one should I accept?"

[If you're not going to be particular about it, does it even matter what you pick?]

As I was hesitating, Ermenhilde's voice resounded in my head.

As if it's that simple! I rebutted inside my head. I may have some confidence with fighting but that's just that. With dangerous jobs comes the risk to my life. Unfortunately, I have no intention to take such a risk.

For some reason, everyone around me wants me to fight like a hero or something. It's really troublesome.

The number of times I almost died during the journey to subjugate the demon god. Just remembering it makes me feel sick.

Killing strong monsters is the job of brave and hero protagonists. And unfortunately, I'm not one of them. That's why, no matter how much Ermenhilde demands me to, I could only shrug my shoulders.

"Oh, this one might be nice."

The one I found was a request the same as before, to gather spirit grass from the forest.

The reward isn't bad either. I think, I'll ask that elf again to guide me around that forest.

[You look like you're having fun.]

"I'm scared of danger after all."

[fuun]

I brought out Ermenhilde, who had started sulking, and patted the rim of the medal.

I want to find a way of life for you that is different from being just a weapon. Thinking that, I smiled wryly but it didn't reach my partner so no reply came.

Even though you have a proper consciousness and will, you still live like a weapon. Is it weird of me to think like that?

.....If I say that to Ermenhilde, I'll get scolded though.

But really, I want to treat Ermenhilde not as a weapon but as a partner.

"It's the best if you can earn money safely, you know?"

Near the city there's an old forest which is called as the forest of magical energy. It's the place where I went together with that handsome Elf just a while back.

The trees were thick and as the name suggested, it was a place filled with magical energy. You can get a lot of magical ingredients there but at the same time the danger from monsters is also high.

The vegetation that has lived long enough attain life and become Treants and Mandragoras.

Mandragora—-it's of the same type as the plant that is called mandrake in our world.

In this world, suitable for a fantasy world, it's a carrot-like monster with 2 legs and leaves on its head. On being pulled from the ground, it runs away at full speed.

They say that you'll die if you hear its scream but there's nothing like that. It's irritatingly noisy and will summon its friends though.

I remember that it took a lot of courage to pull it from the ground for

the first time. My elf guide began to laugh at me for that. But I didn't feel embarrassed. It's the same for everyone for the first time.

"Mandragora, Alraune…….they're all troublesome ingredients."

[—it's the Magic City after all. Aren't these ingredients used for alchemy normally?]

Its voice was still sullen but it finally started talking back to me again so I once again patted the medal. There was no response. It seems it is still in a bad mood.

"Is there nothing which could be a bit safer?"

There are requests for gathering herbs to heal illnesses etc but all of them are cheap. I'll collect them during my journey and it'll be fine as long as there isn't some war suddenly or something.

But, Mandragora's leaves, seeds and roots. The places where these can be gathered are limited. Experiments can take place when war isn't going on as well. In fact, there are experiments that can only be done in safer times.

……as expected, the bigger the city the more dangerous the jobs will also be.

What should I do? I flicked Ermenhilde with my thumb. It was tails. I ended up sighing.

“Let’s stop here for today.”

[You aren’t taking any new jobs?]

“It’s dangerous alone after all.”

[There’s barely any job for an adventurer that doesn’t have any danger though?]

That’s true, I shrugged.

But it’s a fact that it’ll be dangerous alone. I have trouble against lot of enemies and not to mention that I’m not familiar with the forest. I’ll have to hire an Elf or a Ranger or I’ll have no confidence in returning back without getting lost.

I do have mapped the geography of the forest in my head but I really want to avoid any risk of getting stranded inside the forest and dying.

Thinking that, I turned the memos again.

“Oh.”

[Hm?]

Herb gathering. The reward was also good.

The details were to go to the entrance of the forest and gather some herbs.

It's troublesome to gather herbs so the person put up a request in the guild to get someone to accompany them. The client really is whimsical.

Well I don't really mind that so I checked the client.

"....."

[What happened? Why did you stop talking suddenly?]

Client Aya Fuyou.

It's name I definitely know. I closed the memo book.

"……the client was Aya."

[……..pfft.]

Don't laugh goddamnit!

For some reason, it seems Aya knows that I'm in the city. She must have learnt that from Miss Francesca.

Since I never explicitly told her to not say anything, she must have talked about me as I was their fellow [God Slayer].

Well, I don't really mind that and neither do I find this way of looking for me through request bad either.

"But seriously, she really has a piece missing somewhere."

What would she have done if I had not noticed this request?

She should have simply put up a request to find me by name. Well, that'll be troublesome for me in its own way though. I don't want to stand out after all.

[Seriously, she really resembles you a lot.]

"……I'm not that careless/absentminded."

Probably. I whispered lightly.

I think heard Ermenhilde sighing but let's act as if I didn't hear that.

Aya. Fuyou Aya.

One of the God Slayers that travelled with me.

Called by some exaggerated name like Grand Magus, she the Hole

Digging Magician no.1. No.2 is Miss Francesca……..I think.

Pitfalls are convenient so please popularize it.

“She really is giving a pretty big reward. It’s almost double the normal.”

[That’s how much she wants to do a job with you, right?]

For some reason, Ermenhilde said in an amazed voice.

Did I do something bad? I don’t remember doing or saying something like that though.

While unsatisfied, I tore out the memo and put it in my pocket.

The details were to gather herbs. The reward was 10 copper coins. It’s an amount which is double of that of the market price.

I ended up sighing at that.

“As usual, she doesn’t have any idea about market prices either……..”

She’d buy expensive things at their given rates and never tries to bargain. Well, from a merchant’s point of view that’s a good thing.

A normal herb gathering quest would give about 5 copper coins. She should have at least put it at 7 copper coins or something.

Someone else could have taken it before I even saw that, you know.

[Things like market prices, Renji doesn't know them either.]

"There's no such thing."

[Are those the words of the man that sold a Mithril Sword dirt cheap? ……]

"I was having money troubles back then so that was fine.Yup."

[….haah.]

In the first place, I have no use for a Mithril sword. It's a waste of resources.

My skill with the sword is only slightly above the normal soldier. It could be a bit higher or lower than that though.

"Rather than that, it's Aya's request. Aya's."

[That's right, it's Aya's request. Aya's.]

It was a complete fed up voice. I'm used to hearing it but it still hurt me a bit.

“What should I do?”

[You won’t accept it?]

“No, I’ll accept..”

It seems she has been appearing many times after the classes were over so there might be many requests prepared that I might pick up I think. How cute. Though, I’ll die if I wasn’t the actual objective for this though. Out of sheer embarrassment.

I think, at least.

“But, will the reward increase if I wait till tomorrow again?”

[…….let alone being dropped inside a hole, nobody will complain even if you get burned to death or have lightning fall on you.]

Will I really have to face that?

It seems Ermenhilde really was worried about that so I felt a chill up my spine.

True, Aya has a low boiling point. She’s always getting angry at Souichi, or rather, hitting him.

It’s one thing if its just skinship between childhood friends but if you

add magic into that, it's a completely different thing. She really can make lightning fall on someone.

When all the men had tried to peek during the bath, one really fell upon us. It's was a miracle that we weren't burned to death as well. I alone was also especially lectured by Utano-san as well though.

It sure is troublesome to be an adult. I think. Don't peek if there's a woman's bath. It's a savage different world we're living in, I think it's fine to act without restraint sometimes. It helps clear your heart and mind, I think.

[You're thinking about weird things again aren't you?]

"……are you an esper?"

I sighed.

"Well, let's put Aya's request on hold for now."

I want to see how far the reward will increase. Well, not that I'd actually take the reward from her in the first place.

It'd be uncool for an adult to receive small change from a child.

That's why, I'm putting Aya's request on hold out of pure curiosity. For the time being, I'll simply take the memos so that other adventurers don't take it.

[If it's Aya, she might even put up gold coins as a reward.]

"If that happens, I'll get scolded by Utano-san the next time we meet."

[Let's hope it ends with just a lecture. Just be sure to give me to some other person when that happens.]

"……We're supposed to share each other's pains and gains, partner."

Saying that, I exited the guild.

Now then, I stretched my body. Though I was talking in whispers, I talked with Ermenhilde a bit too much so the gazes from others are hurting me a bit. The number of people inside the guild was less but it's not like it was empty.

I really did it again, I felt depressed again.

"After earning a bit more, let's go to the royal capital next."

[Before that, be sure to meet Aya and the others, alright?]

"I know."

I flicked my worrywart partner with my finger.

It was Heads. Yeah.

“It’ll be fine. We’ll meet.”

Well, it’s a bit awkward to meet them again after a one whole year though.

What should I talk about, how should I act, how should I greet them, *etc*.

Such anxieties are there, that’s why I might delay it a bit.

Chapter 14 Hero and the City of Magicians (3)

While hearing the sound of crackling bonfire, I yawned.

Ah, it's a nostalgic dream.

A black night with no street lights. We always spent the nights awake while sitting around the bonfire.

The children instantly slept due to the fatigue from travelling and only us who were above 20 kept awake while drinking.

Me, Utano-san, Toudou, Kuuki. Just us 4 adults. Rest were all young children but even then, those guys were more energetic and more hardworking than us adults.

We worked hard so that we can support them with all we had.

Utano-san with the knowledge she gained from the Goddess, Toudou with his cooking, Kuuki with his shield.

But, yeah, I remember.

On that day—-

"Renji-san, thank you for today."

“ah, no, in fact I should be the one to thank you.”

Aya who was usually unsociable gave her thanks to me.

Who were our opponents……an Ogre and a Cyclops, I think. I only remember that they were giant-type monsters.

For the first time, I used Ermenhilde’s powers——many of the covenants were cleared and I had taken down a large monster.

I was desperate so I don’t remember it properly though.

At that time, Aya had an image of an always angry girl who kept on quarrelling with Souichi.

Well, it’d be weird to be calm even after something weird like getting summoned to another world happened though. In fact, I myself had been wary of my surroundings for a week after getting summoned. I simply couldn’t calm down.

That’s why, I could understand Aya flaring up at not just me but everyone.

And that Aya had unusually come to apologise to me alone, and we had talked a lot through the night.

About each other, about this world, about what to do from here on.

The others, probably being considerate, had quickly gone inside the tent to sleep. They're probably listening us closely though.

That's the kind of people they are. Privacy was at minimum, but because they were such guys, I could get along with them.

While thinking that, I threw a dry stick into the fire.

When the conversation stopped, only silence remained. The sound wood cracking and the sound of trees rustling due to wind were the only sounds that remained.

Normally, I would be drinking along with others while planning what to do next right now but I can't really make a minor drink now, can I?

While I troubled myself over what to do, Aya would be considerate and bring up a new topic.

……I really am a pathetic adult.

"I think Renji-san is amazing."(aya)

"I'm just desperate. From my point of view, Aya-chan or Souichi, you guys seem much more amazing."

And it was true as well.

15yrs old. Souichi's sister Yayoi-chan was only 14yrs old.

But even then, they were travelling to save the world. Normally, they'd be in middle school right about now.

They are much more amazing than me. If I was in their place, I might have been whining and complaining. After all, they were 15yrs old. They're not a protagonist of a movie or game, to be able to even say that they'll save the world is amazing I think.

"There's no such thing. It's because Renji-san and Yuuko-san stay with us, we feel safe and nor insecure……."

"I see."

I threw another piece of dry wood into the fire.

At this moment, I think I was happy, no, I was definitely happy.

I worked hard, desperately, so that I don't become a burden to the kids, so that I can help them when they get stuck somewhere.

In our original world, just working hard alone wasn't valued.

Results were everything. And I had nor produced any kind of result in this world.

My skill with the sword was average. My cheat wasn't especially amazing. And my personality wasn't really great either. If I had to say, I was simply going with the flow.

But at this moment, on being told so by Aya,……..I was really happy. Even someone like me was able to reduce the anxieties of these children, even if only slightly.

No matter in what form, I was happy that I had been of use.

"You finally smiled."(aya)

"Eh?"

"You were always making a serious face till now. Renji-san, your expression can be scary."

Was I really making such a face? I may have been thinking about something too much which might have led to that.

Just the fact that I was the eldest, just that had become a heavy pressure on me.

"Is that so?"(renji)

"Yeah. You don't seem too energetic and only talk much with Yuuko-san and the others….."

After that, Aya pointed out all of my major shortcomings on her fingers.

In the end, she ran out of fingers and laughed while telling me to fix these things.

That I don't talk much, always have a sour look, always go out too much in front against monsters, and always end up with many injuries.

I can't help that. After all, I am the eldest here. I was the senior-most person here.——Just because I'm weak doesn't mean I'll hide behind children.

When I think about it now, I really was reckless.

And this time, Aya threw a piece of dry wood into the fire. Her face that shone from the light of the fire was, smiling.

But, I thought.

If she and others can smile like that, I don't mind staying reckless. I thought that way. As a result, I almost died so many times though.

The smiles of my comrades and my life. If I were to place them on a scale, which would be heavier——-I didn't even have to think. But the me of that time was really an idiot, I think.

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“My magic is too strong.”(aya)

“Yeah, that’s true.”

The scene changes.

We’re still in front of a fire but the places we’re sitting at are different.

That time, we sat while facing each other but now, Aya was sitting beside me.

Her expression was smiling so I think she’s happy.

I wonder what time does this memory belonged to——--

“When it becomes a melee, I end up dragging everyone in it as well and if I start paying mind to that, I start having troubles with a single Orc.”(aya)

“Well, Aya-chan blows her fuse whenever you get backed to a corner.”

“……..was there a need to say that to my face directly?”

“Aya-chan sure is weak when you get cornered.”

When I said that, Aya puffed her cheeks and got angry. After talking to her for a few times I understood but it’s really fun to tease Aya. She gets angry but she doesn’t hit me like she does with Souichi. She simply puffs her cheek and starts sulking.

Because that’s too cute, I end up teasing her more. And as I kept on teasing her like that, I started to feel as if she were my younger sister. I don’t really have a younger sister but if I had I might have talked to her like I did with Aya, I think.

It’s weird if I say so myself but after talking to Aya like this I became better at conversing with the other youths as well.

My feelings to protect them since I am their elder still remain but I started to fight together with them or rather, I depend on them sometimes. Anyway, I feel that I became to fight alongside them rather than simply go away alone to the front.

I wonder what kind of change of heart this is.

“…..Aya ‘chan’ again.”

“You’re younger than me after all.”

“mouu.”

Seeing her expression that suits her age and not some stiff title like Hero or Godslayer, even I feel happier.

As I laughed, she got angry at me again. Puffing her cheeks she glared at me strongly.

She won't attack me like with Souichi but her expression is clear.

But since that seemed even more amusing, I ended up laughing more. Even though she's a magician at a level that I could never reach, her actions show that she's definitely younger than me.

"Isn't it because you're too focused on flashy magics?"(renji)

"That may be so but……since my magical energy is too great, even with a little imagination, it turns into something excessive."

"Oh right, you consulted with Utano-san as well right?"

"Yes."

Utano-san. A person who wished to be able to use all kinds of magic.

Certainly, she's also a magician but almost everything else is different from Aya.

In contrast to the magic of this world that comes from imagination, Utano-san can simply use any magic directly as long it is recognised as an [existing] magic.

Basically, it's similar to the magic in games, RPGs, ADVs, and STGs. (T/N: I have no idea what ADV or STG is. Adv is probably short for 'Adventure' but I'm not sure.)

And Aya's magic is like this worlds, using imagination and magical energy to manifest it.

Rather just being of different types, they are two completely different things.

Even though both are magicians, there's not just a wall or gap between them but a whole cliff.

"Then how about manifesting it in some other form rather than just flames or lightning?"(renji)

"Like rocks or something? Then, I'll probably make giant rocks rain."

"……..What the hell, that's scary."

"I still am working hard everyday you know?"

As expected of the magician that possess the highest level of firepower amongst us. The vector of working hard is so completely different, I

ended up sighing.

Even though, here I am still getting desperate when killing a single monster.

“No, how about imagining something more simple? Not just flames, ice or rocks.”(renji)

“What should I imagine then? Even if I imagine a kamaitachi it’ll turn into a tornado, you know?”(T/N: google kamaitachi if you don’t know what it is. It’s basically a sharp wind.)

“Like I said, why is it always something so violent……no, something even simpler.”

“More simpler?”

As she threw dry wood into the fire, her black hair shone crimson from the fire.

Finding that magically beautiful, I averted my eyes.

What the hell am I thinking about a child who’s almost half my age.

“Something like a pitfall, or using vines or plants to restrict the opponents like in the movies.”(renji)

“…….that, in the end, wouldn’t defeat the monster.”

“It’s fine like that. If Aya-chan stopped the enemy’s movements, we’ll deal the finishing blow.”

With one of the branches, I drew a shitty goblin on the ground.

And after completing it, I slashed it with a diagonal line.

“Magic isn’t simply to defeat monsters. Stopping and constraining the enemy is also a perfect strategy.”(renji)

Well, this girl has no shred of strategy and simply has brute power to crush all enemies though.

Completely different from me who’s trying hard everyday just to not fall behind others.

I feel envious at the same time feel relieved as well.

I don’t want such kids to travel while feeling the danger for their lives like me. Well, everything is simply me reaping what I sowed.

The wish to the goddess. The weapon to kill God. It can definitely kill a god, but that’s all it does.

It’s a weapon only effective against Gods. It was nothing more than a

normal weapon against other monsters, weak……..that's why, I was the natural enemy of the Demon God though. The demons would attack me, hate me, as if I killed their parents. Thanks to that, my life was in danger the whole time we were in the Demon continent.

I always regretted that I should I have wished for something more generic/all purpose power.

No use crying over spilt milk. They truly are great words.

"Un…….I guess that I should be able to easily imagine that."(aya)

Without realizing my inner thoughts, Aya was thinking about how to make my idea work.

She's fast to hit but I think she's a serious and diligent girl. Her way of thinking is flexible and will create a magic which will far surpass what I originally imagined.

Grand Magus. She really is a genius that doesn't shame that title. This Girl, Fuyou Aya.

"Also, do you really feel no reluctance when…….killing living beings?"(renji)

"_____-"

As she heard that, her smile stiffened and looked up to me with surprise

as if she was choking on breath.

I must have asked something I shouldn't have. It's an unnecessary emotion in this trip to kill the Demon God.

It could be said that it'll only be a hindrance, a useless emotion.

But that was only if nobody said or talked about it.

15yrs old. It's a sensitive time, in my opinion.

At such an age, even if it was to save the world, even if the enemy weren't humans, even if the monsters were the enemies of humans, it'll be painful to take away the life of another, I think.

It's something I was meaning to ask Souichi and the others sooner or later as well.

It was simply because we started talking together more that I asked Aya first.

"But, it's to save this world……"

"Yeah."

It's a nostalgic memory.

I can’t hear anything other than the crackling sound of fire and the buzzing of insects.

Even the sleeping breaths of my comrades, I couldn’t hear them. The next morning, I remember being teased.

“_____”

To kill a living being. To steal away life.

It’s much more heavier than what it sounds like.

That doesn’t change even if you have the excuse that you are doing it to save the world. For us who have only seen such things on TV, it was far too heavy.

But even so, Aya’s words averted away from that fact. The duty to save the world.

If we don’t kill the monsters, demons, and the Demon God, this other world will end. Countless people will die. That’s why, kill. That’s why we fight, that’s the reason why we can fight.

The pressure was too heavy but Souichi and the others still took on that duty and continued journeying. Even though I worried about it everyday, my hands tremble everytime, and kept guard every night without sleeping.

For someone, for something, for the world, for comrades.

For me the pressure that came with the title of a Hero felt ridiculous.

I felt envious and jealous of them so much that I felt like averting my eyes———-Everyone was so bright and honest.

“Renji-san……will we able to return back to our world?”

“Un.”

“Will we able to return together?”

“We will.”

——after we kill the Demon God.

We were summoned to save this world. In novels and fairy tales, it’s something prestigious. Something that’d make your heart race, that’d make you excited and happy.

But in reality……..lifestyle was inconvenient, the food was terrible, your butt will hurt after riding horses, you legs would hurt if you walk. You still feel fatigued if you sleep outdoors. And even the beds at inns are hard.

It’s filled with such inconveniences. There’s no hope or dreams in another world. Especially for me.

Compared to others, my cheat was very weak. My physical abilities have been increased from what they were in my world but even then, compared to others, I'll run out of breath the earliest, my reflexes are dull. I don't even have magical energy to use magic.

That's why I desperately became stronger.

I had no choice but to accept that I, the eldest, was the biggest burden in the group.

And to travel with them while accepting that, I had no choice but to become stronger. Doing something like leaving everything to kids who have barely lived half my own life, I simply could not do.

I requested the people from the Knight Orders to teach me about sword fighting. I learnt reading and writing with the help of Utano-san and a famous researcher. I even tried to learn negotiating skills to be able to become more of use.

The [God Slaying Weapon] I wished for was simply a weapon and its user, me, was an amateur. I couldn't let monsters take advantage of that.

I might be able to fight against the Demon God but at the start of our journey, there were only small fry monsters that we'd face so I could only be desperate.

Everyone else was able to become stronger than me with only half of the effort.

It’s amazing I didn’t become depressed. Really.

“Will everyone be able to return…..alive?”(aya)

“We will.”

Nobody’s strong.

Cheats, sword skills, unequalled magical energy, all are nothing more than a pebble at the side of the road.

We came to this world without any kind of resolve. The exaggerated over-the-top goal of saving the world was hiding the reality in front of us. Even though death is right beside us, we have simply become unable to see it.

That’s why.

“I promise. All of us will return safe and sound together.”(renji)

In the end, after everything was over, all of us decided to stay in this world though.

Even though it’s a world where death is always beside you. But that’s why……we had people we could trust that were even closer to us than death in this world.

“If I was in danger……will you protect me again?”(aya)

“If anyone was in danger, I’d definitely protect them.”(renji)

That was an extremely embarrassing thing to say.

Me, who was the weakest was proclaiming that he’d protect his comrades who were the strongest in the world.

The word [definitely] was something only meant for the use of protagonists and should not be used by someone like me who was Villager C.

To protect someone, you have to constantly put your life on the line.

Even if you are close to death, even when you’re full of wounds, even when your spirit is on the verge of breaking, even when you’re in front of an extremely strong enemy.

You have to stand back up. You have to keep on holding on to your weapon.

You have to speak sharply. You cannot give up.

……now that I think back, it really was a miracle I lived through that all.

Even though everyone around me could be carefree even when I'd end up all bloody.

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As I opened my eyes, I ended up frowning due to the sunlight shining from within the curtains.

[Finally woke up, sleepyhead?]

"n, yeah.....right now....."

[It's almost afternoon, seriously.]

I ended up getting sighed at just because I took a nap.

Well, even I think that I slept a bit too much for some reason even though I didn't even drink.

"Say, Ermenhilde."

[Hm?]

“……..nevermind.”

[Wake up already. Get to work, sleepyhead.]

I got scolded.

While hearing that voice inside my head, I got up from my bed.

A nostalgic dream. From when I had been journeying with my comrades, a dream with Aya. After that, Aya worked hard as a hole digging magician.

In fact, rather than using unequalled magic, it was easier for us when she trapped monsters in her pitfalls. After all, we didn’t have to get dragged into her normal magic anymore. Well, we only depended on that magic when sweeping away a group of monsters that had accumulated.

Against large armies of monsters, she did make rocks and fire rain from afar to win before the enemy could even reach us.

Against small number of enemies or in close combat, even a fireball would turn into friendly fire so it was troublesome. Even overpowered cheats have their own merits and demerits.

“Ermenhilde.”

[……what now?]

“Do you think Aya’s still digging holes?”

[Yeah, she should be .]

Immediate reply.

Well, it’s normal since it is a great tactic I guess.

While thinking that, I changed my clothes.

[She probably believes that if she keeps on doing that, Renji will keep on protecting her I guess.]

“In fact, I want to be protected by her instead though.”

[It can’t be helped. You wished for that, and did promise her that after all.]

That’s true.

I wished the Goddess that I want to protect someone. If it gets dangerous, I promised I’ll protect her.

…….that’s why, I could only sigh. I wished and I promised. I cannot change the past.

“Or rather, shouldn’t she have forgotten that already? It’s been almost 2 years.”

[I doubt she would forget that.]

For some reason, Ermenhilde’s voice held some sort of confidence.

It was such a dangerous journey. I doubt she’d remember such trivial words. That too, it’s been 2 years from then. It’s already a thing of the past.

At least, if I was Aya, I would’ve forgotten it. What kind of credibility would those words have if spoken by someone weaker than you?

The only reason I remember it is because it was fricking embarrassing for me and a part of my dark history(shameful past).

[Women are such creatures.]

“No, you’re a medal.”

[Tch.]

It clicked its tongue. What a terrible partner to do that during a conversation.

Sighing at such an Ermenhilde, I stretched my body a bit. Stretching my stiffened body, it felt really nice.

"Today as well, I'll seriously do jobs."

[Please do. Don't show your pathetic side, you're an adult right?]

"I get the feeling that I have already done that way too many times though."

How many times was I saved by kids?

How many times did I attack only through surprise attacks and not frontal ones?

How many times did I bow my head to people?

How many times did I mourn not being able to protect someone?

How many, how many, how many.....

[Is that so?]

"Yeah, that is so."

Changing my clothes, I fixed my appearance at bare minimum.

While thinking about what kind of job should I pick today.

Well, I guess I'll pick something like collecting herbs, though. It's easy, and safe.

After washing my face, I was wondering about what to do of my beard _____

[I only have memories of Renji looking cool though.]

".....you, really say extremely embarrassing things sometimes, don't you?"

[No such thing.]

I, looking cool?

I thought about my past but couldn't think of a single one.

Probably the coolest one is when I faced the Demon God one-on-one, I guess. I almost died though.

Talking sharply like an idiot and then almost getting killed, I can only think of that as pathetic though. Also, the fact that that was the coolest moment, I really can't help it at all.

“For example?”

So I decided to ask instead.

I also want to know these cool moments my partner speaks of.

And, then I’ll explain the reality of that scene as well. Even I think my reasons are truly ridiculous sometimes.

[Not stepping back even once against the Demon Lord. You kept on swinging me against the Demon God at the very front. You kept on fighting in front of those heroes you could call the strongest……..no matter how many times you fell, you always stood back up.]

“Well, I was desperate after all.”

What the heck’s that?

If I didn’t do that, I would’ve died. I wouldn’t have come out of it alive if I didn’t do that. And above all—- I was always full of injuries. If I had not been protected by my comrades, I would’ve died countless times.

That’s why I did not step back. That’s why I never let go of Ermenhilde. That’s why I stood back up. If I didn’t do at least that much, I wouldn’t have been able to stand alongside my comrades.

And above all—— when children were fighting with their lives on the line, I couldn’t be the one to retire first.

“I didn’t want to die that’s why I fought so hard. That’s why I killed. It’s something very normal, Emenhilde.”

[Yeah, that’s right. It’s normal.]

Because I don’t want to die, I want to live, I don’t want to look pathetic.

That was something totally normal and very obvious, and something anyone would do.

Cool? That isn’t it. It wasn’t something so great.

I was simply scared of looking pathetic and being abandoned by them. I was afraid of being left alone. I was afraid of losing all of my comrades in this other world.

No matter how many words you pile up, the answer will be the same. I was afraid of getting hated by my comrades so I fought desperately.

Not for the world, not for someone, not for something. Even if I say I want to protect, in the end I was worried the most about my own self.

“It’s something anyone can do, Ermenhilde.”

For myself—-not for some random stranger, one becomes desperate for himself.

It something anyone can think of. Something anyone can do. To live, to not die——it's obvious that anyone can do it.

[Not everyone can do it, Yamada Renji.]

But my partner's answer was the opposite so I could only feel slightly happy.

The power granted to me by the Goddess, Ermenhilde. It has been watching me from the sides all the time.

It became my sword, my spear, my bow—-my weapon, no matter what the time was and fought alongside me.

And, is always trying to make me into a hero…….even now, it is with me. Even though, I'm just a normal man who could be found anywhere.

[I don't think like that.]

Putting on my mantle, I set the iron knife to my waist.

I picked up Ermenhilde that was lying beside my pillow.

[It's because it was Renji, you could do such things.]

"I see."

ping I flicked Ermenhilde.

That voice seemed boastful and proud and somehow made me feel really embarrassed.

That's why, to hide my embarrassment, I flicked Ermenhilde like it was usual.

It was, Tails.

"haah. Guess I'll have to work hard today as well."

[Only half of the day is left though.]

With just that, we returned to our usual relationship.

User and his weapon. Partners. That kind of relationship.

Chapter 15 Hero and the City of Magicians (4)

While raising a noise similar to scratching claws on a blackboard, monsters with earth-coloured skin came at me while raising their weapons.

Goblin. The monster I have fought the most in this world. Inside the deep forest, their repulsiveness became more prominent and gave you goosebumps just by rushing towards you.

The Forest of Magical Energy.

Its the place where I came yesterday to collect spirit grass. I had been attacked by goblins that time too but this time the situation is a bit more troublesome.

After all, there's still more?, they are coming in numbers that'd make you think like that. Spare me from this. I think like that but the Goblins come at me while I'm sighing.

Today also, the elf with whom I formed a party is not in visible range. Probably he's hiding above a tree or something. I have this image of being able to aim easier from higher places with a bow i guess.

While thinking that, I rotated the knife in my hands.

[They're coming.]

“I know.”

Without any kind of strategy, the goblin charged at me head-on.

I turned away that attack with the iron knife in my right hand and the long sword being held by the goblin stabbed into the ground.

As it panicked to pull it out, I trampled on it with my feet and slashed with my knife. I couldn’t cut it apart completely but since it had torn open its flesh, blood began gushing out.

The bloodspray dirtied my mantle as the goblin collapsed in front of me. But, the goblins showed no hesitation even after seeing its own kind fall like that. Another one charged at me from behind while screaming.

“There’s quite a lot of ’em.”

This was the 6th one. As I turned back, the 7th goblin died after getting shot in the head by an arrow.

As it fell down while running, it stopped near my feet. I doubt there’s any need to deal another blow to it, its definitely dead. While confirming its death with a glance, I turned towards the 8th and the 9th one.

I didn’t even look towards the place where my comrade who had fired the arrow was at. Words of gratitude, etc, all will distractions in this situation.

I simply cut and my comrade shoots.

[They're still coming——it really feels like there's just an infinite number of them.]

"Anything but that."

Swinging the knife in empty air, I got rid of the blood sticking to it. It's sharpness has begun to fall. The edge is chipped as well. It won't be able to take any more attacks. I clicked my tongue at that.

Well, it was ridiculous to fight monsters with just an iron knife in the first place.

Thinking that, I decided to borrow the long sword that goblin was using before I killed it.

As I pulled out the sword from the ground, I felt like my balance would crumble due to the difference in weight of it.

Since I had been using only an iron knife recently, using a different weapon suddenly becomes all the more difficult. It's been a long time since i felt such a weight in my hands.

"I'm not good with heavy ones, really."

[Wanna switch to using me?]

I decided to refrain from that. It would be one thing if I didn't have any weapon at all but if I am not lacking of weapons, I want to avoid using Ermenhilde. Also, if i unsheathed the GodSlaying weapon, my identity would also be revealed. That'd be troublesome.

If it was an extremely dangerous situation, I would have no choice but I should be fine for now.

"With a proper sword, I should be able to take care of mere Goblins. Probably."

[The Elf archer is there as well after all.]

"Yeah."

At the same time as I answered that, i swung the longsword towards the 2 goblins coming towards me. I used only one hand to attack but the slash was sharper than I expected and cut the through the shoulder of the one running towards me till its chest. But due to lack of strength, I was unable to cut through completely and my sword remained stuck in its body.

"tch."

The remaining one goblin swung its rusted axe at me in the meantime.

It was aimed at my face but before it could reach, I kicked at its body faster. The leather boots crushed its flesh and the sensation of crushing something hard came through my feet.

Faster than I could feel discomfort from that sensation, the goblin I had kicked bent forward and vomited.

Not letting that chance get away, I forcefully pulled out the long sword and struck it at its neck.

“fuu.”

[That was slightly dangerous.]

“That wasn’t just ‘slightly’ dangerous dammit.”

Throwing away the bloodstained longsword, I transferred the iron knife to my right hand again.

As expected, this was easier to use. But, something even lighter yet longer weapon would be more easier to use though.

While thinking that, I breathed a huge sigh. I’m tired. Both physically and mentally. This endless fight is making me feel really anxious. If this goes on, I could only expect things to get worse.

Deep forest, thick vegetation. Even the sacredness I felt the last time from the hundreds of years old trees was now getting swallowed by this dark ominous forest.

Suddenly, once again the bushes swayed unnaturally. As expected, once

again goblins appeared from it. And they're even armed. And there's four of them……My sigh became deeper.

But one of them died suddenly by getting hit by an arrow to its head. The remaining goblins showed signs of unrest momentarily due to that and in that time, one more died from another arrow.

How many exactly have we killed till now?

While I was thinking that, the remaining two faced towards me.

"So they still aren't running away?"

[And that's really weird.]

Ermenhilde said that. I, and even the Elf archer are probably thinking the same.

It's weird. Even if they're just goblins, they should have realized the difference in strength after seeing so many of their comrades getting killed. In the first place, these wild goblins should be more sensitive in that aspect as compared to humans.

But even so, there's no signs of them wanting to run away.

I ended up clicking my tongue. I don't have infinite stamina here. Even if I get an infinite number of weapons, the user is only a slightly skilled human. I'm not sure how many arrows does the Elf still have either. While

I was thinking that, one of the goblins coming towards me died after getting shot at the heart with an arrow.

"With this–"

I threw the rusted axe lying near my feet towards the goblin.

Both the aim and strength of that throw was half hearted and the axe was deflected by the goblin.

In that moment, the iron knife, which was the actual attack, stabbed into its face. It stood stock still for a moment then soon fell to its knees.

The annoying sound that had been resounding till now, the sound of weapons, all disappeared. It was silence that could hurt the ears.

Even after around 15 secs passed, more of them didn't come. I finally breathed in relief.

[It's over, eh?]

".....Thank god."

[Oh c'mon—you could've fought even more if you use me.]

"This much is my limit realy."

I shrugged my shoulders. Ah, I'm really tired.

I looked at the goblin corpses lying around and began to count them. 12. I tilted my head due to the fact that the number didn't match to what I had been counting while fighting.

Was I unable to completely kill some? While I was thinking that, the Elf guy came down from the sky. Well, I guess he really was sniping from some tree branch.

"Are you really a human?"(elf)

"Well, I'm not an Elf atleast."(renji)

Replying that to the sudden words, I pulled out the iron knife sticking in the goblin's head.

While thinking about the fact that the number of corpses didn't match, i swung the knife once to remove the blood remaining on it.

Goblin. They were one of the major and most common of the monsters on the Imnesia continent but.....

"Wasn't their numbers a bit too much?"

[That's true.]

Meeting monsters when going into the grasslands for herb collecting isn't rare. Since we went into the Forest of Magical Energy this time, the encounter rate would be even higher.

That much wasn't really surprising but this time, their numbers were really too big.

It'd wouldn't be unreasonable if this was a cave or a Goblin dwelling but this number wasn't something one should face inside this kind of forest.

Even I am pretty used to travelling and journeying. I make sure not to get too close to places that might be a place where monsters would gather. I wasn't even cautious since we were near the entrance of the forest. When the battle had begun, I was sure that it'd end pretty quickly.

Sure, Goblins tend to flock together. That habit is what makes Goblins more difficult than usual but even so!

And they seemed to be even filled with excessive bloodlust as well. Even if we had smaller numbers, it was still ridiculous to attack us directly from the front. Even the fact that they kept on coming even after seeing so many of their comrades killed was weird in my opinion. Their actions were different from what a goblin would usually take.

Any sane person, if they had bigger numbers, would first surround us then weaken us before going for the kill.

But even so, these goblins didn't even make use of the terrain inside the

forest and charged at us head-on blindly. That's why, I was confused.

Maybe Ermenhilde also felt something, its voice was low.

Feeling the sacredness of the forest getting tainted by the smell of blood, my mood worsened.

"Are you fine?"

"Yeah, no problems. You seem fine as well."

"I'm so tired I feel like crying though. I've had enough of monster subjugation for some time now."

As i shrugged my shoulders I sighed.

I think I also heard fed-up sigh coming from my pocket as well.

"Your personality is really hard to understand."

"Isn't it the opposite. I simply hate trouble and want to live in peace."

[Work seriously.]

Am I not working seriously? After all, didn't I come to this forest to collect spirit grass?? Though I don't really feel like doing that request anymore. I'm really tired. I want to go back and sleep.

But still, to think that we'd get attacked by goblins again when we both decided to go gather herbs together.

"It seems we have some kind of fate with the goblins."

"Well, it's not something good to have."

He laughed a little.

I remember getting a request to subjugate goblins during the first time as well.

And this time as well, we were attacked by goblins. There really might some kind of fate.

With Goblins.

.....It's really an ill-fate to have. I want to work more safely.

"Weren't the goblins just now, weird?"

"Hmm....true, I felt that they were more bloodthirsty than usual."

Putting a finger on that well-shaped face, the elf closed his eyes as if thinking something.

He might have something to think about this. The fact that he isn't saying it out loud means that I'm still not trusted well enough.

Without really minding that, I kneeled near the goblin corpse nearby.

[It's just a normal corpse. I can't feel any kind of special magical energy from it.]

"Thought so."

I checked through the corpse while keeping my knife unsheathed but there wasn't anything unusual about it.

If Ermenhilde didn't feel anything strange, then there really isn't anything to it. Well, both me and Ermenhilde aren't really familiar with magical energy though.

I could think of various possibilities but all had very low chance to be true. The Demon Lord or the demons could manipulate monsters but they don't come out of their continent, Abenelm, normally. Now that the Demon God has been killed, the chances should be even lesser.

The sensation of blood on my fingers wasn't really pleasant but it was usual stuff for me. I rubbed my fingers with the blood but there was still no change.

Am I overthinking this?

It really might be just a swarm of goblins.

“Well it’s no use investigating it without knowing anything, I guess.”

“That’s true. Also, if there was a change in the monsters in the forest, then we elves would have noticed.”

“I guess that’s true as well.”

Elves should be more sensitive to such things than me. Especially if its something inside the forest. Cutting out the proof of subjugation from the goblin, I put the knife in its sheath and breathed a sigh.

As the scent of blood stuck into my nose, I ended up grimacing. I have gotten used to the scent of blood but that doesn’t mean I’ll start liking it.

Also, my iron knife has also gone bad. I guess, sharpening it alone wouldn’t cut it anymore.

After returning to the Magic City, I should see if there’s a better weapon available somewhere.

……Though Ermenhilde would start sulking again if I do so.

“It’d be tiring to fight any more goblins. Let’s quickly gather the herbs and return.”

“Yeah, let’s.”

Even the Elf would want to avoid tainting the forest with monster blood.

Well, they don’t seem to forgive the existence of monsters inside the forest either.

While thinking that, I began walking.

[This isn’t interesting.]

As if I care.

Rather than that, I brought out the memo from my pocket.

It’s the memo which has the request written on it. In the client’s name part, Aya’s name is written. It’s details involved collecting herbs together with her. The rewards was 50 copper coins. It’s an extra-ordinary amount.

“What, did you have another request accepted alongside this?”(elf)

“Something like that.”

A few days have passed since then. The reward amount has been steadily increasing.

She should be getting impatient by now. It’s fun just imagining it.

“….You’re making a disgusting face.”

“I was born with it. Leave me alone.”

I guess I should go and meet her already.

Just as Ermenhilde had said back then, the reward for just herb gathering would probably really become 1 gold coin.

A gold coin. That’s way above a child’s pocket money. Well, one way or the other, she is also a hero of the country. She should be having gold coins unlike me. But if I actually made Aya do that while teasing her, how would others look at me if they knew about it….?

Well, they’d probably realize that I was just playing around. I’ll still get scolded though.

[Seriously—-Are you really that afraid of meeting them?]

“Haa~h”

I answered Ermenhilde’s words with a sigh. As usual, this one is straight to the point.

The fact that I was unable to refute it, was it because it was correct or because there was the elf beside me?

Without knowing that, I could only sigh and continue into the forest.

[It has only been an year. Your bonds won't disappear in just that much time.]

Inside my pocket, I traced the medal with my finger.

As usual my partner is straightforward. I lightly patted it.

If the Elf was not beside me right now.....how would I have answered it back?

Well, whatever. I would know the answer when I meet Souichi and the others.

The case with the goblins, was it just our bad luck? It was slightly worrying me but it shouldn't concern me in any case. I have no intention to thrust my neck into more trouble and its the job of brave protagonists to solve such things. I'm not one.

I explained myself. I did but—

"It'd be nice if nothing really happens."

"—?"

I really think it’d be nice if nothing happens.

I hate trouble. I have been involved in way too much already after coming to this world already after all.

……now that the world is saved, I just want to live in peace.

Chapter 16 Hero and the City of Magicians (5)

By the time I returned to the Magic City, the Sun had already begun to set.

While holding the bag filled with the gold and silver coins, the reward I got from the guild, I breathed a sigh.

I really worked too much today. To think that I'd be able to earn a gold coin in a single day! The reward for 12 goblins was really big. I also sold the equipment I had recovered from them so I would get 1 gold coin even after dividing the reward in two. Let's have a luxurious dinner for tonight, I ended up smiling while thinking that. Well, I had my fare share of life threatening experience as a result as well though.

I really don't wan to go through something like that ever again. Earning a lot isn't bad but, I really want to avoid putting my life at risk everytime.

"What will you do now?"(renji)

"I'll go back to my forest now."(elf)

"I see. If something comes up, I'll be counting on you again."

"Sure."

With just that, we decided to split for today.

The city at dusk, families buying ingredients for dinner, people returning from their jobs.

Getting mixed in that same crowd, the beautiful Elf man disappeared from my vision. Even the way he leaves is cool. His back looks really

manly in my opinion.

Somehow I feel a bit envious of that. While feeling such slight jealousy inside, I sighed again.

“Now then, what to do next.”

Returning back to the inn to have dinner, have a drink and going to sleep doesn’t sound bad at all. It’s a bit early though.

This world has too few ways for amusement. My old comrades have been trying to make chess and trump cards popular but that has yet to spread to the massess.

The main reason behind that is that they lack the means to manufacture such things in bulk easily. After they can’t depend on machines like in modern japan and to make such things by hand, they’ll need lot of free labour.

For a country that had been living in the fear of the Demon God till the past 1 year, that would be impossible. Young ones were enlisted in the army or working in repairing and restoring towns destroyed by demons. Elders and children were involved in farmwork or household chores.

They rarely think of indulging in amusement and their thinking is basically, it’s better to work and earn money than have fun. I guess this will continue for some more time. It’s not like the threat of monsters has completely disappeared so it’s only obvious.

That’s why at night, drinking, exchanging info with strangers and adventurers, fighting each other; that’s basically what most people did.

[Isn’t it about time for the Magic Academy to close for the day as well?]

“hm?”

I turned my gaze towards the setting sun. Well, I guess it’s around time for school to end I guess.

I once again pondered over what to do.

[Oh c’mon. Can you not move forward till someone pushes your back?]

“But…”

Now how should I answer Ermenhilde’s question resounding inside my head?

I want to meet them, I think. There’s no reason for me not to do so. I haven’t met them for one whole year. The feeling of seeing those children having grown up now is strong.

At the same time, what should I talk about when I actually meet them? I end up thinking like that.

Anxiety. If I were to put it in words, it was only that. I want to meet them but I don’t know what I should say to them.

Considering that I’m supposed to be the elder here, this isn’t laughable. ‘It’s been a long time!’ even though I know that all I have to do is just say that much..

“haah.”

[Don’t you want to meet them?]

On hearing that, I raised my head.

“I do.”

[Then do so. You don’t have any reason not to, so isn’t it simple?]

“I see.”

As usual, Ermenhilde’s straightforward, or should I say simple.

I ended up feeling envious of my partner. Though I know I’m simply being irresolute and overthinking things too much. this can’t even be called an actual problem.

Being pushed by Ermenhilde’s words, I began walking as I mixed into the crowd.

Albana Magic Academy. It’s oldest academy in the Magic City Ofan.

Only nobles and those with great talent can attend that place though nowadays, only nobles or children with similar backing are attending that place.

Basically, rather than a place to learn and gain knowledge, it has simply become a place to earn a degree from a prestigious school.

Well not all are like that but according to the citizens of this city, majority of the students belong to that category. Though that’s info I gained while only drinking, but then again, a man’s true feelings come

out only when he's drinking.

[Going by the rumours, the place Souichi and the others are going isn't exactly a great place, eh.]

"Belonging to a high lineage or pedigree means the more oblingations you have as well after all."

Well, it's not like I have any such experience though. Thinking till that, I sensed a gaze and I turned around.

Though I'm in such a crowd but our eyes definitely intersected. A man in a worn-out robe. What reason could it be? To be targeted by a mysterious man?....I could think of way too many.

For example, something related to religion. Though he was the Demon God, there were people who'd still call 'GodSlaying' as a grave sin. Well, it's not like I can't understand them.

Our powers are too great. There are people who fear that we can also kill the Goddess of the humans or the Spirit God of the Demihumans as well. Truly, it's not really difficult to understand.

A power too strong will always be hated. These kind of things shown in mangas and movies, are actually very true in this actual different world as well.

Nevertheless, I neither want to create more enemies nor do I want to indulge in more bloodshed. What will I get from all that? Rather than hating us, spen this energy in recovering from the after effects left by the Demon God.

There are others who simply hate us other world heroes, now that the Demon God is dead, we are not needed here, or something like that.

Though they are an extreme minority, they do exist. I wonder if Utano-san and Kuuki who are actually at the core of the Kingdom are gathering too much attention to themselves.

[What happened?]

"No, nothing."

While I was thinking that, the owner of that gaze disappeared in the crowd.

I wonder what all that was about? Well considering he didn't come to talk, I doubt he has any sort of good will towards me.

"Someone was looking atme."

[Did he realize that it was Renji and me?]

I really had enough of this.

I simply want to live leisurely as an adventurer.

Also, I doubt that that robed man was simply someone normal.

It's only my wild intution though.

"...I really am not good with places with too many people."

[That's a first I'm hearing something like that.]

That's because it's the first time I'm saying that. In fact, places with

more people are better than less. The man known as Yamada Renji can easily mix and hide inside a crowd after all.

Thinking till that, rather than hiding my status it feels more like something a guy with chuunibyou or a hikkikomori would think like.

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In front of me was a giant gate....It really is huge.

The stone gate gave off a sense of pressure and gives an image of blocking anything coming towards it. It was wide enough for 3 carriages to pass through easily alongside each other, and was so tall that I had to raise my head to see its top.

On both sides of this gate were armoured guards with spears, 2 on each side, making a total of 4 guards.

Behind them was a small iron door probably for these guards and students to pass through the gate. It'd be a pain to open that giant gate each and every time I guess.

Do these guys get salary just for standing there whole day?...I ended up thinking like that.

"How did they even build this thing?"

[Well, wouldn't it be made by humans carrying stones, shaping them and then combining them together normally?]

Well, that may be so but it really looks amazing. The Imnesia's royal castle was also amazing but this Magic Academy's gate is also incredible. You might call it 'the potential of human beings' but it's really amazing

how people actually carried so many stones to here. Even though it wasn't like only one man was doing it but still.

The stones have been shaped equally in the form of ingots and hundreds and thousands of such ingots have been brought together to make this gate.

The door was of silver. It's useful in driving away demons and is used quite a lot in the royal castle and other such old buildings.

In fact, Ghosts and undeads can't even touch such doors at all. In front of such a big gate, I think low level ghosts won't even be able to come closer to this. Though it's completely possible to break and enter through the stone parts.

"Is something the matter?"

"Ah, no. I was just thinking how amazing this gate is."(renji)

"What, is this your first time in Ofan? Albana Magic academy's front gate is really famous but even then it's your first time seeing it?"

[Oi, now we're being treated like we're some country bumpkins.]

Since I was looking curiously at the huge gate, I was misunderstood as such. Answering the guard, I agreed to Ermenhilde's words inside my mind. Well, it's not exactly incorrect to say that I'm from some rural place. I did spend the past 1 year in exactly the remotest of villages.

Also, it'd be helpful for me too if I was misunderstood like this. It'd be a pain if they get uselessly suspicious of me after all.

"I'd been living a life not related to a place like schools, you see."(renji)

“I see. Well, only rich ones can afford to go to such place after all.”

“Yes. Unfortunately, I have been living my life as an adventurer to meet my daily needs.”(renji)

“Ah, I guess that makes sense.”

From my outfit he seems to have judged me as an adventurer—a weak one that is.

I don’t know whether I should be happy or sad about it.

For the time being, my partner was deeply sighing inside my pocket.

[….How deplorable.]

“If you’re looking for a job, then you should go to the guild.”

“Yes, well, I have something to do at the academy.”

“—fuun.”

His gaze turned towards me as if looking at someone suspicious.

Well, I do look the part. My equipment was just a tunic and trousers. And just a mantle over it. I totally do not look like someone who’d have something to do at a place where nobles go.

Rather than equipment, what I’m wearing is more similar to casual wear. Rather than an adventurer, it’d be easier to believe that I was a normal citizen.

The only thing that was something like a proof of me being an adventurer would be the iron knife hanging by my waist. If even that was a long sword, the impression would have been much better.

My mantle was stained with the blood of goblins so I might look slightly more adventurer-like I hope.

"Is it a request?"

"No. An acquaintance of mine attends this school so I thought I sgould show my face since I came to Ofan during my journey."(renji)

"An acquaintance?"

"Yes."

[Wouldn't it be fine if you just used the name 'Renji'?]

Then, I'll definitely be treated like some sort of fraud/swindler. That would definitely lead to them becoming overly suspicious leading to me being interrogated.

The result would probably be the same if I used the name of Souichi or the others, I can totally imagine it.

A nameless adventurer trying to get close to heroes. Maybe even a normal citizen. These dutiful guards would probably see it like that.

"So, will it be fine if I wait in front of the gate for a while?"(renji)

"....What, so you don't want to go inside?"

"It's a school for nobles right? It'll only end up troublesome for me."

As I shrugged my shoulders, I felt the guards relaxing a bit.

"So you understand that much."

"I do have certain years of experience with my age after all."(renji)

"Then, I don't really have anything special to say to you. Just don't cause a scene."

Saying that, the guard returned to his station. 'Sorry for the trouble' I sent him away with a smile.

Seemed like a pretty frank guy to me.

[....I just can't understand.]

"Get used to it. Unfortunately, I do not hold a special title like a Hero."

There were very few people around the academy.

There were a few who were looking at the gate like me, and that was all.

Rest were the guards on duty. The giant stone wall dyed by the setting sun gave off a feeling of loneliness as well.

On looking closely, there were no weeds growing on the wall. I guess it's being properly maintained.

[No matter how many times I hear it, I can't get used to Renji's formal way of speaking.]

"You're being rude, as usual."

Even like this, I do intend to maintain the least amount of formality necessary.

In fact, among the ones that traveled with me, wasn't I the one tended to be the most wary of such things?

Even the youths, though they were cautious at first, but after getting used to us, lost all kinds of formality in their speech.

Only the guys in the age group of me and Utano-san kept this sort of decency in our way of speech.

The ones who didn't mind it all were the school going children group. Getting excited due to going through something like getting summoned to another world, they were super happy.

At first, they even thought they were some special humans or something. Though that all disappeared after the journey actually started.

Journeys are meant to be tiring. Walking, riding horses, swaying in carriages, *etc*.

There was nothing as great as cars here. Feet hurt after walking, horses would sway, and carriages were hard to sit in.

They'd soon start complaining. And when they finally started getting used to it, we had to climb mountains, entering forests. The enjoyment of getting summoned to another world disappeared very quickly, and living became desperate, fighting after getting frustrated, and then laughing after making up.

[I wonder if Souichi and the others are healthy.]

"They probably are. Though Souichi and Aya are probably still fighting a lot."

[That's true.]

I ended up laughing imagining those scenes from an year ago.

Close childhood friends…in fact one could say that they got along well a bit too much. ALways fighting and then quickly making up again.

On being reckless while fighting monsters, on their food habits, on every small and important topic, they'd argue with each other.

But, I guess they'd still be like that. I can easily imagine them like that.

"Hm?"

While I was reminiscing about the past, a heavy sound of bell resounded in the world at dusk.

My consciousness came back to reality.

That did sound like the bell of ending classes but how is it actually?

For some time, I focused towards the academy.

At that, the guard I had been talking to came towards me again.

"Classes ended just now. The dorms are that way but will you wait near the gate here?"

With his finger, he pointed towards the dorms. Or rather, is that how the dorms are. It's meant for nobles so the bulding are completely different from where a normal would live.

They sure are living in an amazing place. As I said that, the guard laughed.

"I'll wait here. It seems even the dorms would be uncomfortable for me."

"Wise decision."

[I'm bored.]

For a medal, you sure are impatient.

As I gave a wry smile at the unexpected words, the guard laughed again.

"If the nobles lived a bit more modestly, the lives of the commoners would also have gotten better."

It seems he misunderstood my reply to Ermenhilde and continued the conversation.

Well it is boring just waiting like this. And I have to be careful of the surroundings when talking to Ermenhilde. That's tiring in its own way.

"That's true. Money gathers with those who already have it whereas goes away from those who don't after all."

"It's a harsh world. Even I'd like to have an extravagant dinner sometimes."

Shrugging my shoulders, I agreed with him.

Well, that isn't really necessary though. Living modestly is good in its own way.

Even without luxury, humans will live on. In fact getting too used to luxury, and becoming unable to live modestly is pathetic in my opinion.

Though there are a lot of people here, what about actually socializing?

For me, I prefer the relaxed and warm atmosphere of villages. But I guess people will always prefer luxury to that.

While I talked like that with guard for some time, the silver door

opened, and students began to leave.

It seems there are people on the other side of the gate as well who opened it.

There were men whose muscles could be seen from above their clothes —So it's human powered eh? There were 6 of them and all of them were skinheads. I wonder if there's some meaning behind it. I doubt it though.

"Then, good luck with your job."

"Ou. It'd be good if you can also meet with the one you want."

"Thank you very much."

One again sending the guard off, I brought out Ermenhilde from my pocket.

"Well then, will I really meet them?"

[It's been an year after all. I'm excited to see how much they've grown.]

"That's true."

I flicked the medal with a *ping*. Heads.

fuu, breathing a sigh, I returned Ermenhilde into my pocket.

"I feel nervous."

[How cute.]

Stop that. I'm not at an age where I'll get happy if you say that. In the first place, the word 'cute' isn't a compliment for guys.

The students also realized of my presence and were glancing at me.

Well, I do realize that my clothes really don't match the place.

I should have paid a little more attention to my attire maybe? Well, not that it would have changed much. My sense in clothing is average.

At least I'll be able to talk properly to Souichi and others on these clothes.

"huh?"

While I was appraising my clothes, I heard a somewhat recognisable voice.

On turning towards it, a single girl was standing there.

A high class golden embroidered blue robe. A red ribbon and white blouse. A blue skirt that reached till the thighs. A beret like hat on the head. It was the uniform of the academy.

And above all, black hair and black eyes. Hair that reached the waist.

Glossy, well-maintained straight hair. Slightly drooping big eyes.

I ended up staring at that recognisable face for some time.

"Yayoi-chan?"

"Renji-oniisan?"

We both called each other's names.

For a second I thought it'd be Aya but I was totally wrong.

In just a year, Aya would not be able to give off such a calm and gentle presence, I'd definitely not recognise her if that was really the case.

"You've grown."

"Renji-oniisan has…..grown out his beard."

At that, she started chuckling at me.

[That is why I said. Shave! It doesn't suit you, a beard that is. Looks untidy…]

Such harsh remarks. It seems to have gotten even more unforgiving due to finding someone with a similar opinion, I guess.

There's no such thing, I rubbed my chin. I don't find that slightly prickly sensation to be bad.

"Eru-san as well, it's been a long time."(yayoi)

[Ah, long time no see Yayoi. You've gotten prettier.]

"Thank you very much."

I see, so that's what I should've said.

—-nope, not going to say that actually though. There's no way I can say that to someone who feels like a daughter.

"Also, I have the same opinion as Eru-san."

"Hm?"

"The beard, it doesn't suit you."

I ended up averting my gaze at that.

I see, so it doesn't suit me.

Being told that by a girl with a smile sure has an effect. It felt like a knife just stabbed through my chest.

[Say it more. Renji doesn't listen to what I say after all.]

"Really? I don't think so though?"(yayoi)

"That's because Ermenhilde started nagging too much in past one year."(renji)

[I have to say something if Renji is being lazy.]

As we continued our usual banter, she gave a small chuckle again.

As she laughed while hiding her mouth with her hand, she looked even more prettier than her age.

"Both Renji-oniisan and Eru-san haven't changed much."(yayoi)

[Is that so? Renji's lifestyle has become extremely dull and lazy in my opinion.]

"Oi stop. It hasn't become that bad."

"fufu."

As I quarreled with Ermenhilde, Yayoi-chan laughed at us.

Hmm.

"Really, you both haven't changed."

"Yayoi-chan has gotten bigger though."

"....Telling a girl that she's gotten bigger might not really be a compliment though?"

Is that so?

Her height's grown, and her atmosphere has become calmer. It was like that a year back as well but now it has become more adult like.

I guess it's true when they say that children grow fast. Even though her height was barely till my chest back then, now she's as tall as my shoulders.

Her height that was taller than the normal girl her age made her feel even more mature.

Her long hair and robe gently swayed with the wind. Yayoi-chan standing in the sunset looked extremely precious and my chest became warm inside.

My worries regarding what I should say to them completely disappeared. From the bottom of my heart, I felt glad that I decided to meet them again.

[We seem to be standing out. How about moving to a place where we can talk with ease?]

On Ermenhilde's words, Yayoi-chan turned towards the surroundings.

I too, at that, finally felt the need to pay attention to my surroundings.

She must be famous at the academy. Now that the classes were over, a huge crowd of students were accumulated in this area.

“This is troublesome…”(yayoi-chan)

“That’s true.”

“There’s a park a little walk away from here. How about going there to talk?”

Saying that, she grabbed my hand.

I flinched a little from the sensation of that small and gentle hand.

“Yayoi-chan?”

Wouldn’t this make us stand out even more? was what I wanted to say but the person herself kept smiling widely and led me by the hand.

“Isn’t this much fine? It’s been an year, let me spoil myself at least now.”(yayoi)

“Such things, please do with your boyfriend.”

“fufu.”

The answer to my words was a happy voice and a wide smile.

…Now I feel like an idiot to be worrying over what to do. No, I really might be an idiot.

[That’s why I said, just go and meet them.]

“‘Tis as you said.”

Just because of my useless inferiority complex, I went into hiding for a whole year.

I thought that was for the best, I still think that way. An existence like mine will only become a burden for the other God Slayers.

An existence that can only kill gods. An existence that can't fight without getting others into trouble first. The weakest among us all.

But even so, if a reunion was such a happy thing, it's a good thing I met them.

I thought that way while looking at the happy Yayoi-chan leading me.

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"umm so, it's been a while. Have you been doing well?"(renji)

"Yes. Me, nii-chan, and Aya-chan, all of us are doing well."

"I see. That's good."

Since I had no idea what I should talk about, only weird things came out of my mouth when I actually did speak. Sitting on the bench of the park, we talked about a lot of things.

About school, friends, Souichi, Aya, Yayoi. And a little about myself. It's embarrassing after all. Saying that I have been lazying around in a rural village. It's not something worth talking about.

Children were frolicking around in the park and after some time, their parents came to pick them up.

In this world, Yayoi-chan and the others don't have their parents.

Utano-san or Kuuki-san had been acting as their guardians. And, I as well had been acting like a counsellor or something.

Remembering that, I started feeling nostalgic again.

Though there's a kind of lonely feeling thinking that now we don't need to act as their guardians.

As I turned towards Yayoi-chan, her face didn't have that loneliness of the past and was happily laughing.

Her face looked really pretty. It showed that the past 1 year, her school life had been really fun for her.

"After getting summoned to this world,"(yayoi)

"un."

"I was scared, lonely, and sad….I only had onii-chan and Aya-chan."

Slowly, she continued speaking.

But her voice seemed bright and her face seemed happy.

That's why I as well, brought out Ermenhilde and gently rubbed the rim of the medal.

"But now, Yuuko-san and the others let us go to school, I made lots of friends, and the other comrades of ours send us letters regularly."

"I see. Then–"

"And today, I was able to meet Renji-oniisan as well."

'You aren't lonely anymore'. My words coincided with Yayoi's.

Our gazes met.

"I really think that we 13 should always be together."

"I see."

"From hereon, there will be very few times all 13 of us will meet or so Yuuko-san had said but I, want to meet everyone again."

I made her feel lonely, I did something bad, I made her worry.

My chest grew a bit tighter on seeing the emotions in her eyes. But I was unable to avert my gaze from her serious expression.

"Please don't disappear so selfishly ever again."

"….Got it."

As I nodded, her serious expression became gentler.

"Will you promise?"

"n, I get it. I promise…I won't disappear like that. I'll first properly tell you before doing so."

"No, don't disappear in the first place…."

She sighed while saying that.

But with a smile…..I scratched my cheek thinking that I ended up promising something to her.

Promises are heavy. Even the easiest of things….I'd want to make sure to protect that promise. I think that I must protect my promise no matter what.

[It's tough to be an adult, eh?]

"It can't be helped. Renji-oniisan is everyone's father after all."

"I'm not at that age yet. Utano-san may seem like a mother but I'm more closer to an elder brother at most."

"Mouu…Renji-oniisan is the same as usual I guess."

[Really. How deplorable..]

For some reason, these 2 seemed to be amazed at me.

A father….That's not in my character. If Utano-san were to hear that, I can imagine her roaring in laughter.

"Also, renji-oniisan, Aya-chan had been really wanting to meet you, you know?"

[Yeah. Enough to put out requests at the guild for him.]

"That Aya. Or rather, 55 copper for herb gathering…It'd be suspicious so I'd not take up the request instead, normally."

Saying that, I brought out the memo from my pocket.

Client: Fuyou Aya. Reward: 55 coppers. 10 times the normal reward for such a request.

Such a request, everyone'd end up wondering what kind of monster will you have to fight for this.

"Also, magic has been applied on that."(yayoi)

"Magic?"(renji)

"Yes."

[…I don’t sense any magical energy though?]

Or rather, what’s up with putting ‘magic’ on the memo? If it’s Aya, shouldn’t it be ‘magecraft’? [T/N: this is a little difficult to explain. It seems they are differentiating ‘Mahou’ and ‘Majutsu’ on the way of use similar to how it’s done in Type-moon/Nasuverse for those who know that. This wasn’t really explained well earlier so I had been suing ‘Magic’ for ‘Majutsu’ as well but I think I’ll change it to ‘Magecraft’ depending on the context.]

This doubt must have appeared on my face since Yayoi started giggling while hiding her mouth.

“Aya-chan wished for that memo to be noticed only by Renji-oniisan. She put out that request while ferverently wishing for that.”

I ended up tilting my head on Yayoi-chan’s words.

What kind of magic is that?

“Wishes are also a type of imagination. A strong wish can manifest as a true miracle.”

“And her wish did manifest as a miracle? Is that what you’re saying?”

Aren’t miracles supposed to be the work of Gods?

But I don’t think it’s impossible for human wishes to manifest as a miracle.

I saw such miracles many times during our journey to subjugate the Demon God so I cannot refute it. But isn’t this miracle a bit too specific?

[fumu, somehow it's quite the romantic type of magecraft.]

"….for you to speak of words like 'romantic', Ermenhilde you've also matured/grown."

[Tch.]

Yayoi-chan giggled as Ermenhilde clicked its tongue.

"Be sure to meet Aya-chan as well, alright?"(yayoi)

"Yeah. Also Souichi as well."

"Yes."

Saying that, I stood up from the bench.

We've talked for quite a while. Also, it's staring to get darker as well.

The street lights running on magical energy were shimmering faintly.

"I'll see you off till your dorm."

"Thank you very much."

The cold wind made my mantle sway.

Looking at the sky, the stars were twinkling and the faint red moon was in the air.

"renji-oniisan.."

"Hm?"

"It's good that you didn't change."

Not understanding what Yayoi-chan meant I tilted my head in confusion.

Seeing me like that, she started chuckling again.

"Day after tomorrow, we have a holiday. How about all 4 of us meet on that day?"

[Sounds good to me.]

"Yeah."

After that, I'll head to the capital. I thought that in my head.

If I stay too long, I'll start getting too attached. I'll start thinking to stay 'a little more, a little more time.'

That's why, I'll leave this city soon as well. I won't say that out loud though.

"It's a promise alright?"(yayoi)

"Too bad. My promises are one per person only."

[….You are such a..]

I got a sigh from my partner but this alone I won't change.

"It's difficult to keep promises after all."

"yes."

But the person herself seems to be nodding happily.

“Renji-oniisan is a person that always keeps his promise after all.”

“……”

That level of trust makes me feel itchy.

It’s not really that great of a thing. I protect my promises. That’s only obvious. Very normal. That’s why, it’s not something on which you should base your trust on someone.

My promise with Aya. That I’ll protect her. That I’ll protect my comrade who was even stronger than me.

I have made a promise to Utano-san as well. And with my other comrades as well.

And now, my promise with Yayoi-chan also increased.

—-Ahh

[It’s tough being an Onii-chan eh?]

“Well what can I say, being called that by you is, how should I say, it doesn’t fit, no, interesting/funny…”

[…Tch.]

It really is fun. To be with your ‘comrades’.

Chapter 17 The GodSlayers (1)

The next morning after meeting with Yayoi-chan.

I woke up early for once and reached the guild sooner than usual only to find a crowd by the counter.

[What's going on?]

"Did an interesting request come up or something?"

Curious, I also went towards the counter.

At a single glance i could tell that atleast 20 people were gathered by the counter. Even the receptionist herself was not going closer.

Since it couldn't be helped, I gave up and decided to wait till things calmed down.

Thinking about confirming the request I'd do today, suddenly my shoulder was patted on.

"You're here."

"Hm? Yo, morning."

There, the elf I had been partying with recently was standing.

But, somehow he seemed really tired.

His gaze lacked the usual vigour. Also, there was no sight of the bow he usually carried.

“My bow was broken. I’m having a new one prepared for me.”

It seems my expression gave away my thoughts as he explained about his bow.

But, broken? Did he have some quarrel with some humans or did he suffer a defeat against some monster?

I’m well aware of this Elf’s ability. Even though the monsters in the Forest of Magical Energy are strong, in the end they’re still just goblins and such. I don’t think he is weak to be defeated by them.

“Did something happen?”(renji)

“Yeah. A little problem has occured.”

“Problem?”

[fumu….sounds interesting.]

I can only get a bad feeling about this though. I answered Ermenhilde's word like this in my mind.

If possible, I want to avoid anything troublesome. Also, dangerous things as well.

"is it related to that crowd over there?"(renji)

"Pretty much."

[What happened?]

"……What happened? It's rare for so many adventurers to gather like that at the counter."(renji)

Either the reward is great or it's something very troublesome. If possible, please be the former one.

Those who came to the guild after me are also looking towards the counter wondering what happened. Also, since the crowd is big, they're also simply standing by the side like me.

As expected, that big of crowd will attract anyone's attention, I guess.

"Don't you feel that goblins have been appearing a bit too much recently?"(elf)

“Goblin?”

Now that I think about it, yeah.

Yesterday, we did get attacked by a bit too many of them.

Certainly, that wasn’t normal. Without any objective, for so many goblins to gather was weird.

“The abnormality has appeared in the Forest of Magical Energy as well but it seems that the situation is the same even in the plains to the south of the Magic City.”

“So, goblins are appearing in large amounts both in the Forest and in the Southern plains of Ofan?”

[That’s strange. The number of Goblins here shouldn’t be that big since adventurers hunt them regularly.]

If there was a special reason behind it, the guild would have received intel on that by now.

If there isn’t any, means that these goblins are appearing like that naturally. There are two ways how monsters are born.

Well, there may be others I don’t know as well, but I am aware of only two of such ways.

The first is simply to give birth to a child with a partner of the same race. It's only natural, or rather, if there's a male and a female of the same species, it will happen.

The other, is through creation by the Demon God. That guy could really, as long as he had magical energy, create infinite number of monsters. Though there were some restriction/conditions to it—-we don't know what they are.

Even after the Demon God has been defeated, the fact that the monsters haven't disappeared is also a reason behind it. Neither humans nor the Demihumans have the resources to go around exterminating all the infinitely created demons. Well, they won't be created infinitely anymore but the number of monsters is still very big.

And currently they continue to increase by giving birth to children normally.

Adventurers, soldiers and the demihumans are also killing them continuously but I wonder how much the amount has actually lessened in this one year after the Demon God was killed.

"So, is the guild planning to perform a large scale sweeping force or something?"(renji)

"Yeah. They are currently recruiting members."

I see.

Such occurrences weren't uncommon when the Demon God was still alive.

When we were journeying, we even had to fight Goblins in hundreds. Well, most of them were cleared out by the mage group though. And the rest were taken care of by us.

But, we were attacked by more than 10 goblins in just the Forest. Including the ones on the plains and deeper inside the forest, the total number of Goblins should become pretty big this time as well.

How many will the guild be able to recruit for this, I wonder.

"It'd be nice if they can find some mages."(renji)

"The earnings are good, that should be able to attract quite a few."

After all, they'll get a good wall as well.

With the vanguard in front, all mages have to do is fire magic like cannons from the rear. There won't be an easier job than this.

The problem will be the battlegrounds. Even if they lure the goblins with food, the plains are far too wide. And they simply can't turn the Forest of magical energy or the any place near the city into a battlefield either. So, inevitably they'll end up fighting right in the middle of the plains. These things should be thought up by someone with better authority though. Not me.

They have a habit of swarming, so though ambushes are pretty much impossible, Goblins do have intelligence to try and surround their opponent which can become troublesome.

A magician's fire power is unquestionable but that'd backfire in a melee battle. They'll become unable to use magic that'd drag their comrades into danger. The ones who can still use it in such a case are either a total fiend or a person that has extreme level of trust in their comrades. There are magicians who know magic that won't drag their own comrades into danger but that's a very less minority.

Other than that is, Elf or Pixie's spirit magic. This is also used by drawing power from the spirits so depending on how you use it, it can differentiate between enemy and ally.

"What should I do?"(renji)

[You won't participate?]

"I'm hesitating. The reward sounds good but the danger is equally high."

And it's not like there'd be a huge difference from my participation alone anyway.

As long as there isn't a specially strong——like that black Orc mixed with the enemies, I'm no different from a normal adventurer.

A many-against-many battle is total hell. No wait, any battle is hell. As someone who knows that, I really want to avoid getting involved in any large scale battle.

Also, it seems they'll be able to gather a huge force even if I don't take part.

"I thought you'd take part."(elf)

"….Why?"

"You seem to have money problems, and you are skilled as well. You won't have problems against mere goblins right?"

"You overestimate me. I'm not that great…..your support was simply good that's all."

As I shrugged, he ended up sighing. I wonder about that. As if saying that.

In fact, when we were attacked by goblins in large numbers, the number he took down was bigger than how many I did.

Well, it might be wrong to estimate abilities with just numbers but it's true that he made it much easier for me to move around. That alone was proof of this Elf's abilities.

"It seems you're just lazy."(elf)

[Exactly.]

…….Why the hell did you reply there Ermenhilde?

As I sighed on my partner’s cruel betrayal, I headed towards the counter.

Things had calmed down and the crowd had lessened.

Seeing how many had applied till now, 30+ for the vanguard and 20+ for the rear guard including archers and magicians.

I don’t know the exact number of the goblins but this many should be more than enough. I doubt I’d be able to do anything exemplary by adding to them.

And, the reward would also smaller due to that. If I messed up, maybe gathering herbs would earn me more than this.

Well, in such sweeping battles, the true limelight is on the magicians. Vanguards like me won’t stand out much anyway.

On checking the lowest reward guaranteed, it was 50 copper coins. Not very great for a reward. Well, the opponents are just goblins though.

“They’ll start tomorrow, eh? Pretty sudden.”

[…..It’s the day you promised Yayoi-chan and the others as well.]

Yeah.

Also, it seems the Magic Academy is helping as well. Basically, they’ll be sending magicians. The rear guard will increase by 10 more people like that.

And that means—-

[Souichi and the others will be sent out as well.]

Seems so. With Souichi and Aya, mere goblins would be just fodder. If Yayoi-chan is also there, injuries wouldn’t be a problem anymore.

It’d be one thing if we had just come into the world but for Aya who could do a magic battle with the Demon God, it’d be insta kill.

Though I doubt she’d do something that’d make her stand out so much like that. If she did that, adventurers would end up working for free.

That’d only gain animosity.

Well, she’d probably just make sure that nobody dies indirectly. Souichi as well, would probably simply increase morale of the front lines.

Now that the Demon God was defeated, the only thing expected out of the heroes is to 'stay and act like Heroes'. Protecting their comrades, saving the country, fighting for those who can't fight. Such heroism. That was all that was expected.

Also, absolute trust.

As long as Heroes are there, they'll be fine no matter what. They won't lose no matter who the opponent is.

Such absolute trust. It's damn heavy, selfish, and basically depending on others. I don't really find it bad, though. Even I think like that. If there are people you can depend on, to depend on them is what makes one human. That is what a goddess is for, that is what the GodSlayers, the apostles of the Goddess are for.

To be able to respond to that trust is what makes one a Hero, and I'm one who can't do that. It's as simple as that.

"waah....this is why I hate monster subjugation."(renji)

[umu. Only this, is something one might need to think about. Renji is awkward as usual after all.]

"....."

While saying that, I wrote my name on the participant list. Renji. Just that much.

The result won't change from just my participation. But that doesn't mean I can leave everything to Souichi and Aya.

It's a fact that I'm weak but using that as an excuse I'm not going let children do all the work.

If their burden would lessen even a bit from my participation, I'll do it.

What is a child's duty? I questioned myself. It is to study, play with friends. Eating a lot, and to sleep a lot. That's what a child must do. (T/N: This guy is a natural born daddy Xp.)

It's definitely— not to pick up a sword and fight. It's not to kill monsters. That's not the duty of a child.

"So you'll participate in the end?"

As I wrote my name, the Elf came to talk. I shrugged and answered him.

"Some acquaintances of mine are also participating you see."(renji)

"Someone dear to you?"

"Something like that. The world has finally become peaceful, I don't want them to fight anymore though."

That's why, even if just one more, I'll kill those goblins.

So that the fight can end faster, even if a little. So that, Souichi and the others can end without fighting.

I casually thought. Their school life should be fun. They are still only 18. It's an age where you'd be having fun with your friends. Yesterday, Yayoi-chan looked really happy while talking about her school life. I'm sure, Souichi and Aya would be the same.

……..That's why, I sighed. Those guys look better laughing rather than fighting. I think like that.

"If only I was stronger."(renji)

"What's that?"

"Nothing. Complaining to myself. Don't mind it."

If I was stronger. If I could fight alone. Without getting others involved, if I could protect others. Then, the burden on my comrades would have surely lessened.

If I, who was only protected all the time, could add to their strength, I could have fought more. The sacrifices would have been less.

While I was deep in my thoughts, the Elf also wrote his name on the participant list.

His name was Faylona apparently. We partied together quite a few times but I never got to know his name. He must have been that cautious with me, I guess.

“You hadn’t written your name yet?”(renji)

“I was hesitating on whether to participate or not.”

And you actually called me lazy?

As I lightly glared at him, he shrugged his shoulders as if troubled.

Because he looked good even then, I ended up sighing for some reason. I really envious of handsome guys, seriously.

“If you are participating, then I’ll do as well.”(Faylona)

“What the heck?”(renji)

His gaze looked directly at me.

“You’re strong. With you, I’m sure I’ll survive.”

“Oh please. I’m just a poor adventurer. Even if you put your trust in me like that, I have no way to respond.”

“That’s too bad.”

[Really.]

Like I said, why the hell are you sympathizing with this Elf?

Whose ally are you anyway? I lightly hit Ermenhilde inside my pocket.

“In any case, the job’s tomorrow. Let’s take it easy today.”

“That’s true.”

Saying that, we both left the guild.

“Do you drink?”(renji)

“Only fruit wine.”

“Alright.”

[No, no, why’s that alright?] (T/N: this dialogue sequence doesn’t sound as funny as it was in JP.-_-’)

I lightly hit Ermenhilde inside my pocket once again.

“Wanna go take a drink to cheer up?”(renji)

“So early in the day?”

“It’s good sometimes, to drink from early morning.”

“…..Well, it’s not like I have anything else to do so why not.”

[Oi.]

While hearing Ermenhilde’s voice, we started walking.

“You’re pretty relaxed even before such a big battle.”(elf)

“Is that so?”

Goblin subjugation isn’t that rare in this world. And with Souichi and others involved, there’s no way we’d lose.

I just have to do my job. Well, I might not get to do anything as well, but there’s a chance I might have to do something. If there is something like that, I just have to do it. It’s that easy. Together with Ermenhilde.

“Contrary to your appearance, you’re quite the bigshot eh?”(elf)

“I’m exactly as I look. Just a humble adventurer who can be found anywhere.”

[……Oh god, this drunkard.]

Chapter 18 The GodSlayers (2)

The atmosphere before a battle. Tension that stabbed the body and the heaviness of being closer to death.

While being illuminated by the light of the campfire lit for warmth that was surrounded by the adventurers, I was breathing deeply. Such an atmosphere was enveloping my body.

My chest was in pain as if it was tightening, as if it was being stabbed by a small needle.

I gazed at the surrounding adventurers. They were all youths in the their latter teens. There were some even younger kids as well. But that wasn't really unusual.

But maybe, the ones around me were still not used to such battles——it might even be their first time. Thinking like that, I breathed deeply again.

Now, we'll be fighting. With Goblins. Along with numerous adventurers. Against countless goblins. A battle to the death.

There were those who were calmed by the fact that there were many comrades and then there were those who afraid of the fact that they'll be fighting an incredible number of goblins. They participated due to their youthful enthusiasm but were now getting scared just before it actually started.

They looked similar to the old me. I gently patted Ermenhilde's rim inside my pocket.

[What happened?]

"Just a little nervous."

[……Don't say it so openly.]

I'm used to fighting goblins. I have fought them many times. Killed countless of them. In the plains, caves, inside forests, within cities.

But that doesn't mean I'll stop getting scared anymore. Especially, when the comrades I have to entrust my back to—-those that'll fight with me are so nervous, their nervousness was transmitted to me as well.

Looking up at the sky, the shining sun will soon reach its peak. Just a little more till the operation starts.

The participants were, approximately 50 people who could only fight in close combat like me. Magicians and Archers were approx 30. Leaving the Magic City Ofan, we were currently encamped approx 1Km south of the city.

Here, the goblins won't be able to directly cause damage to the city and their movements could be seen from the defensive walls of the city as well. If any movement was seen they had been prepared to inform us through smoke signals.

And the goblins were—

“What a view. What a great view it is.”

[Yeah right. It’s disgusting.]

In my line of sight, in the middle of the plains was a huge group of earthen coloured goblins. Their distance was around 1Km away from us. There was enough distance that one wouldn’t see them if he didn’t strain their eyes.

RIght now, they are probably greedily devouring the meat we spread around for them there as lure. As a living being, it was enough to make you feel unpleasant. But to not even think of taking that food away back to their dwelling, I guess they really are just wild beasts.

Their number was more than 200. Probably close to 250 or something. We were only 80 so it’ll be around three goblins for everyone.

There really is a lot of them.

And I ended up feeling that something was behind all this. Goblins do have a tendency to swarm but this number isn’t small enough to be called just a group. Simply speaking, though higher number may equal more power but when the number is too big there will definitely be a need for a commander/leader.

Adventurers who are used to goblins should have already sensed that as well. That this situation was abnormal.

"I feel like I have been getting involved in too much trouble recently."

3 months back, an Ogre suddenly appeared in a village. 2 weeks back, there was that black Orc that could use the Demon God's flames.

And this time, a group of 200+ goblins. And I am willingly getting involved in this so I can't really complain much either.

I wonder how Souichi and Aya are right now? Thinking that, i looked towards the place where the magicians had gathered.

7 students have participated from the Albana Magic Academy. Souichi, Aya, and there was even Miss Francesca there. With Souichi and Aya as the lead, the students had gathered with the others just a while back.

Those 2 had become totally used to this so, they seemed rather bold or should I say, relaxed. The rest 5 of them were nervous enough that it showed on their faces. They're noble children. It should be the first time they'd be taking part in such a battle.

The scale of this battle wasn't unusual when the Demon God was still active but even then, only trained and veteran adventurers and knights took part in such battles. Students and nobles were protected by their parents.

By the way, I haven't greeted them yet. They shouldn't be aware of my

presence either.

In Ermenhilde's words I'm being too difficult. I am aware of that as well.

"Are you fine?"

"Ueeh? Yes."

I spoke to the adventurer beside me who had a blue face.

He must be in his teens. Looks the same age as Souichi. Well, Souichi is child-faced or rather, looks much younger than his actual age though.

Turning into a handsome guy in just one year damnit. He also seems to have grown taller than the last time I saw him but it still seems lesser than other men his age.

I'll make fun of him later, definitely.

He had been always saying that he wanted to become more manly yet became more androgynous looking instead. He did have a cute type of face from the start but it seems to have become more refined as well.

Even Aya looked more manly than Souichi. Leading the students with Souichi, she looked only straight while walking with a puffed up chest.

Her strong, hardened gaze was the same as back then. So much that

both me and Ermenhilde spoke She hasn't changed at all at the same time.

And this adventurer who was the same age as Souichi and the others seemed like he might puke anytime now.

"Calm down. The magicians will blow them up with their magic and we'll only have to hunt the leftovers. It's an easy job."

"……I know, but….."

I guess anyone would still get scared.

Even the me, back then, was the same. While feeling nostalgic, I brought out Ermenhilde.

"Oi, boy, your name?"(renji)

"Um…Rob. Roberiano"

"Nice name. Roberiano. Rob. And all of you other who are still shaking. Look at this."(renji)

Saying that, I flicked Ermehilde with a *ping*.

And then catched the rotating medal.

“It’s heads.”

As I opened my palm, it was Head as I had proclaimed.

Not just that. I once again flicked the medal and caught it.

“It’s Heads.”

I repeated.

Again and again. Countless times. I brought out Heads.

While I did that, voices saying that I was playing a trick or was cheating some way rose.

So I let them decide whether it’ll be heads or tails and then flicked it again. Answering their calls, I brought out Heads or Tails as required.

Like I had once shown to Miss Francesca, I was simply seeing through what side it’ll be to decided how to catch it but nobody realized that.

“Next should be Heads.”

“Alright, it should be.”

Saying that, I flicked Ermenhilde again. It was Heads. A cheer rose from the onlookers.

“You guys are lucky. You were able to guess the right side of the coin everytime.”(renji)

The cheering stopped and it became silent again.

“That’s why it’ll be fine. Nobody will die. You’ll definitely live.”(renji)

I put Ermenhilde back inside my pocket.

The trick was over. There was no fear inside the eyes of that adventurer anymore.

That’s how it should be. This is all I can do right now. I could only do such a ‘trick’ for them.

“Don’t get worked up due to mere Goblins. Think about surviving more than killing goblins. Protect the backs of your comrades. If you do so, nobody will die.”(renji)

[You’re being unusually talkative today.]

I shrugged and answered Ermenhilde’s somewhat happy voice.

It’s not like I’m thinking of something special. I simply don’t want anyone to die.

I don’t even know their names. Only for today, we’ll fighting together. Their many people like that after we came into this world. And, also many who died among them as well.

That’s why, I don’t want them to die. The Demon God was subjugated. The world will be at peace from now on. That’s why, I don’t want them to die in such a ridiculous way.

It’s only normal to think like that. And if there is something I can do, if there is a way to remove their nervousness, if there was a way to reduce their chances of dying even a little, I will do it. I don’t want to stay doing nothing.

“Just do what’s normal, normally. Then, others would help you. Humans are weak alone.”

To my words towards Ermenhilde, the young adventurer answered instead.

Finding it somewhat amusing, I ended up slackening my expression.

[Renji.]

Since the gazes were gathered at me, I couldn’t answer so I gently patted Ermenhilde inside my pocket.

[……That’s fine. Just stay like that forever.]

What the heck’s that supposed to mean?

While looking at the now livened up adventurers, I breathed a sigh.

If this is fine, then I’ll stay like this forever. Drinking, carefree, leisurely, I’ll enjoy my life in this world.

Looking up at the sky, the sun told that it was almost time to start.

I wonder if Souichi and the others will be fine or not?

Thinking that for a second, I renew my thoughts. Both of them were stronger than me, rather me worrying about them, they’d be worried about me.

Let’s just to do what I can do. To end this battle as fast as possible.

So that those kids don’t have to fight too much.

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The moment the battle began, the result was set.

The bombardment by the magicians. Fireballs that could drown many humans, Ice arrows that could pierce even Orcs, compressed Air bullets that seemed to twist the space itself. All these were fired together at the goblins. Explosion followed and blood splashes sprayed in the air. Their shrill cries reached even my ears.

That was the signal that marked the start of the battle. Several dozens of Goblins died from that opening attack and the remaining came at us.

Raising their warcries, they ran towards us. Then, the second wave came. This time, it was a rain of arrows by the archers. Once again, dozens of Goblins were killed and covered in blood.

The third wave was once again an attack by the magicians——or so it was supposed to be.

There was still distance between the goblins and us. But the third wave never came.

“What now?”

The other adventurers also looked towards the magicians to see what happened.

But, there were too many people to see clearly.

In meantime, the Goblins continued their approach. They're still much more than us close combat fighters. Probably around 200 are still left.

They kept getting closer. Soon, impatient voices started coming from the surroundings.

[Looks like something happened.]

"——This is why, I hate monster subjugation jobs."

Are Souichi and Aya fine?

I questioned but I had no answer. For now I can only wish that nothing happened——that it was only a defect in the strategy.

[They're coming. Now, support from arrows or magic is totally useless.]

"I know."

Drawing my iron knife, I twirled it around my fingers.

I intended to use the GodSlaying weapon Ermenhilde if it turned into a melee so this is fine. It's not like I'm having money troubles but——as you'd expect, in a big battle such as this, I want to use my trusty partner only.

While I was thinking that, the Goblins had closened enough that I could see their expressions. Lowering my waist slightly, I put strength into the hand holding the knife.

At the same time in the west——to the left from my point of view, an explosion occurred.

It was probably fire magic. Looking that way, I could see smoke rising. Due to the attack from the unexpected direction, I hurriedly looked towards Ofan. The signal that was supposed to come in case of any extraordinary circumstance was……not there.

"Tch."

[They're coming.]

Facing to the front again due to Ermenhilde's voice, I dodged the first attack made by a goblin and cut its neck with my knife. Then, I blocked the long sword of the goblin that attacked using the previous goblin as a shield. Blood sprayed on my face. And due to the pressure of the incoming goblin, I ended up getting pushed backwards and was now fully drowned in this all-out melee.

The figure of the young adventurer was no longer beside me. Was he also swallowed up in this melee or was he crushed by the wave of goblins? But i did not have the composure to worry about that.

I grabbed one of the goblins trying to ignore and pass through me and ripped its neck.

Approximately 200 goblins. They were literally 4 times more in numbers than us. Even though they were mere goblins, facing so many head on couldn't even be called a proper battle.

"Ermenhilde!"

I called its name but the manifesting jade coloured magical energy was very weak.

I ended up clicking my tongue and gripped the long sword created out of magical energy. The blade was of silver colour completely different from the jade coloured blade. It was no better than a normal iron sword. Light, sturdy and sharp. It was just a normal weapon. Sheathing the iron knife, I held the long sword with both hands.

Slashing the sword, I tore open the body of the goblin coming from the front. Its legs stopped and guts spewed out. But that was also crushed by other goblins in the very next instant. Let alone clicking my tongue, while cursing badly inside my mind, I swung the sword again.

Even the body from the different world transfer compensation was weak. Only one of the 7 covenants had been cleared.

"Are Aya and others alright!?"

[Before that, worry about yourself first.]

The momentum of their attack lessened, and they completely surrounded me.

……Joking aside, there's literally no one beside me. In such a condition, I could feel cold sweat flowing down my spine.

From the sounds of clashing swords, I could tell that there were others fighting. AT least we weren't annihilated already.

"Fucking hell!"

I cursed.

I don't know how many are there behind me but there were 3 goblins in front of me. But before they could jump at me, a sound of explosion came. And then a howl.

It wasn't a shrill sound like the goblins. It was deeper, beast-like, monstrous howl. And then another explosion.

"_____"

[An Ogre?]

At the same time, I slashed away the Goblin jumped at me with a battleaxe.

I had no time to relax.

Yet in that one single moment, I looked towards the source of that howl —-the 5m tall Ogre.

It’s characteristic one horned head was nowhere to be seen and was falling down on its knees.

[Taking down an Ogre in two shots. Not bad Aya.]

“As usual, she’s ridiculous.”

While restraining the goblins, I talked to Ermennhilde.

Fighting an Ogre-class monster, I need to have at least 5 of the covenants cleared to face it properly, yet she could take it down with just 2 attacks. It’s really not laughable.

I really think I should have also wished the goddess to let me also use magic. It’s a fantasy different world after all.

For the time being, i relaxed confirming that Aya was alright. To be able to kill an Ogre that easily, Aya should be the only one that can do such a thing among all the ones present here. Well, there might a talented student in the Academy with the same level of talent as Aya but I doubt there’d be many with the same cheat levels of magical energy granted by the goddess.

“Maybe I should have also wished to be able to use magic or something.”

[……..]

Locking my sword with the goblin’s short sword, I took out my knife with my left ahnd and cut open its belly.

The goblin stopped moving from that and I used my long sword to block the attack coming from behind to surprise me. Taking a few steps back, I ended up stumbling due to something a lost my posture slightly. Using that something as a cushion, I rolled and then stabbed with the long sword like a pole weapon.

How many have I taken down already? While thinking that, I felt something lukewarm on my left arm. First I thought it was Goblin blood but that wasn’t it.

Looking beside me, a human’s corpse was lying on the ground. It must be this guy on which I stumbled. His face looks familiar. The one I talked to—-it was, Rob.

[Renji.]

“I know.”

I slashed away the Goblin that aimed at me while I was getting up and split its body in two.

The different world transfer Cheat was now increasing in effect. Ermenhilde's sharpness increased. The silver blade now showed a jade-coloured design as well.

"That makes two. Fuck!"

Fucking damnit! I once again cursed inside my mind.

Until someone gets in danger, until someone is not sacrificed……I cannot fight.

That reality of that fact was extremely heavy. [A friend's death] had been cleared.

I looked at the surrounding goblins. Maybe they are being cautious against me, they aren't trying to use just numbers to overpower me…..not yet at least.

[It really is weird.]

"Ahn?"

[The Ogre was defeated, so many of their fellow goblins have been killed. Still they show no sign of fear.]

Slashing the silver sword, I beheaded another goblin. Unlike before, it cut through till its bone with no resistance at all and even cut away the

leather armour.

If I could fight like this from the start—-no, if all my covenants were released from the start, would that boy still be alive?

Thinking that, I could only sigh. I'm thinking unnecessary things. For now, I should just swing my sword to survive. Thinking anything else is useless.

I turned towards the nearby goblins. For some reason, the goblins who hadn't retreated even after the Ogre was killed, took a step back.

"——ruuah!!!"

Without any form, it was a simple rough attack. Its long sword broke and was cut apart from the shoulder.

The goblin who attacked my defenceless back, I simply used intution to hit him away with the handle of my sword. I could feel its bones breaking. The warmth of its flesh and pulse of its innards. All that was felt through my arm, which was disgusting.

Turning back, I stabbed my iron knife into its forehead. More goblins jumped from behind me. Turning again—-before I could swing my sword, they were pierced by arrows.

"Are you alright!?"(elf)

“Yeah, somehow.”

It was the Elf guy who had supported me.

Even though the snipers should be in a different direction….

Well, it turned into such a battle, the strategy has already completely collapsed anyway.

“Why did the third wave of support not come?”(renji)

“Orcs and Ogre were summoned out of nowhere. The Brave is currently facing the Demon.”

[Demon? Why would demons be……]

“Was it also that demon who gathered the monsters?”(renji)

“So it said. To lure out the Heroes apparently.”

A pretty crude strategy.

If it can summon monsters, it must be a middle or high class demon. But, it lacks in the brains department apparently.

If it wants to beat the Brave, goblins and Ogres won’t be of any help. They’ll need a monster strong enough against which Souichi wouldn’t be

able to win at least.

For example—-the Demon Lord.

While I thought that, suddenly a huge magic circle appeared on the ground covering the whole area.

I looked below— Scarlet coloured magical energy was Aya's colour. And the magic circle created by it was shining brightly.

"Wh, What!?"(elf)

"She really doesn't know how to control her power. Seriously."

"What!!?"

The Elf beside me was really panicked for once.

The power of a Hero. The magic of the Grand Magus. If she had been using that from the very start, there would have been no sacrifices at all.

But if she had done that, the adventurers would not get the chance to earn much. I guess, both the guild and the Academy must have told her to not take part actively.

But as a result, numerous victims were born. That boy—-Rob also died.

[Renji.]

“I know.”

The next moment, sharp roots burst out of the ground and skewered the goblins everywhere.

They died after being pierced by the roots in the arms, legs, body and the head.

That girl really makes quick work of even so many goblins. Opponents against whom I was fighting desperately, she killed them in an instant.

This is a God Slayer. This is the power of a Hero.——the power of the cheat given by the Goddess. Unimaginable strength that’d make everyone envious of it.

But I don’t have it. The power to protect many, to save them. Cheers rose from various places. It seems there are still many alive……..I’m really glad for that.

[Only the demon remains now.]

Well, even that should be easy to deal with SOuichi there.

Moving through the skewered bodies of the goblins, I moved towards the place where the magicians were fighting.

For some reason, the elf came after me.

“What?”(renji)

“Where are you going?”(elf)

“……I was thinking of at least seeing this demon once with my own eyes.”

I doubt there’s anything there for me to do.

Still, I want to witness it. The end of this battle. The face of that demon.

Demons. Monsters with intelligence that live in the Abenelm continent. They understand human tongue and are even said to wiser than humans.

Those guys, don’t normally leave the continent. The last time they came, the Royal Capital had been half destroyed. It was soon after we had been summoned. The reason was to destroy the new hope of the humans or something.

But this time? The Brave—-it was to lure out Souichi or so it had said. But what after luring him out? A mere demon, could it summon the Demon Lord? That’s impossible.

Then,

“I see.”

More monsters were summoned. The empty space fluctuated, took shape, got color, and became a full body.

Ogre. A Black Ogre. One that was even bigger than normal Ogres had been summoned.

I had seen this Ogre. Or rather, I had fought something very similar just recently—-That Black Orc. It’s giving off the same feeling as that.

Without even glancing t the goblins, I ran. The Black Ogres swung its fist.

It was blasted by magic but it remained unharmed. Was its skin that hard or was it resistant to magic. If its the former, even I’ll have trouble with it. I thought while running.

“Ermenhilde.”

[Yeah.]

“Lend me your strength.”

[…..With pleasure, Milord.] (T/N: Ermenhilde usually uses ‘Aruji’ for master when not calling Renji by name but here it uses ‘Goshujinsama’ which has a different connotation.)

Now, where the hell are you learning all these words?

While having my cheeks cramp from being called like that, the silver sword turned back into jade magical energy. And then——I gripped the Jade coloured Divine Sword in my hand.

Jade coloured blade, a golden handle. The Elf who had been running by my side looked at this sword.

“You…..”

“What. It’s just a normal sword fund anywhere.”(renji)

[As if I’d let a weapon like me exist everywhere.]

“Not a swo—You’re not a weapon, you’re my partner.”

[…….]

I ran. Faster than before.

The Ogre swung its fist. Before it could hit the ground, I threw the Divine Sword and it stabbed into its flank.

Due to the sense of pain maybe, it roared loudly. The Ogre, Souichi, the demon, Aya who was about to get smashed by the Ogre, and every surrounding adventurer, all turned to focus at me who threw the sword.

“This is embarrassing.”

[…..How about trying to act a bit more sensibly for once? Seriously.]

But with this——

[With this, 5 of the covenants have been cleared.]

I can fight.

Chapter 19 The GodSlayers (3)

The fist that was swung struck the ground with a force enough to smash the earth.

Even though such a reckless attack should have made it show a lot of openings, there really was no chance to counter back. Black skin that felt like steel. But I think that it was actually even tougher than steel.

The moment that fist struck the ground it did create a small earthquake like effect in the surroundings. That stopped those moving towards it to counter attack and the rest who still jumped at it while shouting were deflected away by its other arm.

It seemed ridiculous but it was totally like an Ogre. Truly an attack completely dependent on brute strength.

Normally speaking, an Ogre has an height of about 5m, dark red skin and a single horn on its head. Its limbs are similar to a human's, but its fist could split even a rock in half. They rarely group together, at most 2-3 would stay together.

They have a wild temperament that makes them fight even with those of their own race and even treat goblins and Orcs as prey. Ogres were considered the biggest threat on this continent ruled by humans……you could even call them [tyrants] of sorts.

But this monster rampaging in front of me was even bigger than a normal ogre at a height of 6m. It fist could smash the earth itself, let

alone rocks. It's jet black skin was hard and was easily withstanding the magic attacks and arrow support without doing anything.

It's appearance was that of an ogre but felt like a totally different monster. It's similar to that black Orc that could use magic.

——It's similar to that of the arm of the Demon God.

"Tch."

[.....It's difficult to pierce through.]

While hiding my face till upto my nose with my mantle, I clicked my tongue. Even Ermenhilde seemed to be slightly irritated.

The cloud of dust was really harsh and it made even breathing difficult. Another problem was the screams and shouts of the adventurers surrounding that black Ogre. Loud voices end up stimulating Ogres. It's difficult to make sure that the Ogre doesn't switch target to these adventurers.

And also, the Demon supporting this Ogre.

Grey hair that reached his waist and wings like that of a Falcon. A tail grew out of his back at the end of which was a mouth with sharp fangs. That in itself was also a weapon.

The sclera of his eyes was slightly muddy black and his pupils were red.

His own teeth looked similar to humans. The colour of his skin was pale-bluish and he was wearing clothes similar to humans as well. Even though he looked like a human, he was a completely different existence.

It was race that had features like wings tails and above all, incredible magical energy not possessed by normal humans. That was indeed a Demon.

Flying by putting magical energy into its wings, and releasing magical energy that seemed to distort the atmosphere was enough proof for that.

Magical energy that could be seen by naked eyes was possessed only by us other world travellers and Demons.

“Can’t we shoot him down with something?”(renji)

“I’ve been trying but he always dodges the one-shot types…..”(aya)

“And the stronger ones?”

“……That’ll end up dragging the surrounding adventurers as well.”

I see.

Aya, who I was protecting behind me, said that with a regretful voice.

She won’t say it directly but its clear that the surrounding adventurers

are becoming a restraint for her. Me and Souichi could quickly get away from the Demon and the Ogre the moment Aya used her magic.

All of this is the fault of that Black Ogre.

There are moments where it makes dull movements. Every adventurer tries to use that moment to try and attack. That certainly is an opening but it's useless if your attacks don't work on it.

It's probably intentional I think. By doing that, it can limit our movements——and also block Aya's magic.

I can't believe that an Ogre would have that much intelligence but it would be normal considering a demon is controlling it.

"——Renji-niichan, what do we do?"(souichi)

Souichi who was fighting the Demon came near me and asked with a troubled expression. In fact I want to ask that you know?

Aya held a wooden, magician-like staff in her hands and Souichi held a beautiful transparent bluish blade.

It's the sword that's referred to as the Goddess' Holy Blade by everyone. Even though it was actually given to him by the Spirit God by contracting his whole body to a spirit……..The Goddess was totally irrelevant here.

At most, the Goddess had acted like a middleman and talked to the

Spirit God or so I've heard, but that's all there was to it. It should be called the Spirit God's Holy Blade in fact. But even then, everyone else made up stories thinking that since we were summoned by the Goddess and were provided Divine Protection by her, so the Holy Sword should also be given by her.

I really don't want to know anymore of an adult's foul mind. In fact I find it admirable that the spirits didn't come to say anything even after knowing this.. Well, they can't really talk though.

"It's simple. We strike down that Demon first. Then, we kill the black Ogre."

This black ogre and the previous Black Orc, there are lot of things I want to ask that Demon about.

Why could I feel the Demon God from these two? And above all, why can a normal Demon summon a underling of the Demon God.

How should I say this, no matter how I look at it, this Ogre is much stronger than the Demon himself. The hierarchical order should be reverse. Intelligence wasn't important here. The [Demon God] was that special to the demons. Well it's obvious considering he's their God.

And that is why it was too weird that this Demon could control an underling of the Demon God.

"Okay. Let's fight as usual eh?"(souichi)

I really don't think a 18yr old guy should be saying that while smiling. To kill and whatnot.

Well, it's considered normal in this world though…..But as someone who knows children of that world, I can't get used to it. In fact are Souichi and others normal considering they got used to this world?……..

While I was thinking that, Souichi ran once again to pull the Demon's attention to himself. He looked like a single shadow. He moved with such a speed that could only make one recognise him as a black shadow.

That speed was so fast that I could only follow him barely even with 5 of the covenants fulfilled. If one was to tell me to cross swords with him now, it'd be impossible for me.

Souichi, who closed into the Ogre in an instant, slashed at its thighs. But it only resulted in sparks flying and there was no blood loss. Just how tough is that skin? The jade Divine Sword was still stuck in its flank.

Against anything related to the [Demon God], it seems the God Slaying weapon Ermenhilde was more effective than any holy sword with divine protection of spirits or gods. That had been only proved an year back.

Different from the one I threw, I held another sword in my right hand again.

"…..Renji-san?"(aya)

"Hm?"

While I was aiming at the Ogre who was fixated at Souichi, a voice called me from behind.

That voice was very weak-sounding different from the Aya I knew. As I answered without turning back, a sigh came from my pocket.

We're in the middle of a fight after all, I don't want to loosen my guard. I want to quickly end this.

Souichi will take attention and I'll deal the finishing blow. It was the same strategy we used against both the Demon God and its descendants. Well, it wasn't really something complicated to be called a strategy though.

"How many of your covenants have been cleared till now?"

"4."

"……."

Was that too easy to see through?

The number of covenants cleared. They were very simple things. I who didn't possess magical energy would receive magical energy from Ermenhilde with every clearance. I create weapons with that. Basically, the more of the seals have been released, the more stronger the weapon I create.

For Aya who is knowledgeable in magecraft, she should be able to figure out the number of clearances from my magical energy. And also, which of the covenants have been cleared as well.

The 12 comrades that were with me are well aware of the conditions in which my power is released. The conditions to clear the 7 covenants, that is. What I have to do, and what I need to sacrifice.

[My will to fight], [To protect someone], [Against the Demon God], [Protecting a Promise]. These 4 should be the ones that Aya should be aware that have been cleared. But my magical power was clearly at the level of 5 cleared. The remaining one——she should be able to guess that considering the situation. Even though she's 10 yrs younger than me, she has a good head on her shoulders. She must have ascertained the situation already. That's why, I simply shrugged my shoulders.

[Let's finish this already, Renji.]

"Yeah."

I took Ermenhilde's help and answered. I don't intend to start talking here. We both know that there's no room for talk while in a battle.. Even if the opponent is mere fodder——if you loosen your guard, your friends will die. We were too well aware of that.

I put strength into the hand gripping the Divine Sword. I looked around and——

“——Do it, Aya.”

“Yes.”

The moment she stabbed her staff in the ground, a scarlet magic circle appeared.

With the Ogre at its centre, it even covered all the surrounding adventurers as well; it was that big. To activate such a large scale magic, it would take numerous Elite magicians even of the royal knight’s order not to mention the time taken for preparation. There was no magician like Aya who could use it instantly and by herself.

Reversely speaking, even those who didn’t know that Aya could use it would be convinced thinking that if its one the GodSlayers, they can do it.

Seeing the magic activate, the adventurers raised voices of surprise and bewilderment.

[Hurry and run. Or you’ll get dragged into it.]

At the same time, Ermenhilde sent her [voice] into everyone’s head.

Adventurers who didn’t understand the situation started to look around thinking that a magician was using a spell. I could only sigh at that.

[I’m saying, if you don’t want to get dragged into a fight of GodSlayers, hurry up and run away!]

Once again, Ermenhilde used her [voice].

And this time finally, the adventurers started to retreat outside of Aya's magic circle.

"Now then,"

"——let's go on a rampage as usual."

At the same time as Aya pulled out her staff, the magic circle began to shine even more brightly. The shining light seemed very sacred and the black Ogre stood out inside of it.

"Do you even know how much I was looking forward to today?"(aya)

Saying that, the magical energy inside the circle came together.

The aim was not the Ogre, it was to take down the most troublesome Demon first.

There's a chance he might run away the moment we defeat the Ogre, they're clever like that. And he might also use the surrounding adventurers as shield as well.

It was a fact after all that the black Ogre was purposefully creating a situation to make the adventurers believe that they could fight as well.

That's why first of all, we need to get those adventurers to move away from here. Nect, deploy the magic circle on the ground to make it believe that our aim was the Ogre.

"Fall down already."

Speaking with a heavy voice filled with killing intent, the next moment, the Demon was being cautious of the magic from the ground fell from the sky.

What she had controlled was gravity. The magic circle was for preparation.

In the first place, using a magic that could be recognised was always a last resort. It was one thing if it was the time when we had started our journey when she wasn't used to using magic but right now, Aya could have beat the demon even without the use of the magic circle.

At the same time, I also ran towards the Ogre.

With 5 of the covenants clear, my physical abilities were at an extreme and I covered 20m in a single breath.

Souichi once again slashed at the Ogre's legs. Once again, only sparks flew.

At the same time, I cut at its other leg. Here, there was no resistance

and I cut its leg away from the ankle.

It raised a scream and the Ogre fell down as it lost its one leg.

It tried to support itself with its 2 arms but the moment its arms were about to touch the ground, the earth in that area alone disappeared. Aya had dug a hole with magic. Both its arms buried into the ground and with a heavy *zuun* sound, it struck the earth face first.

"fuu."

The Demon was lying on the ground crushed by gravity and the Ogre was buried in the earth with one leg cut off.

Now that both had become unable to fight any longer, I breathed a sigh.

Just like that, I first cut off the Ogre's head. The Divine Sword cut through its neck with no resistance and the head rolled away.

"Can I retire already?"

[It seems like it'll get more troublesome later on though, can you act like you don't notice what's happening all the time?]

"……Tch."

Dropping my shoulders, I clicked my tongue.

Sorry, Rob. Roberiano. This is the most I can do.

I remembered the face of the young dead adventurer. I didn't really promise that I'd protect him but the fact that he had to die at such a young age pierced my heart a little. On the battlefield, killed by the likes of goblins. Even though he wasn't really different from Souichi and the others……his life had only just begun.

But this is what a battlefield is like, it can't be helped. I don't want to think like that, to use the battlefield as an excuse, I could only sigh.

"Now then."

[All that remains is the mastermind behind this.]

Can we even call him a mastermind? I really can't think of it that way. While hearing Ermenhilde's words, I walked towards the Demon trapped in the cage of gravity.

If that Demon thought that he could defeat Souichi and others with just an Ogre, even if it had become the Demon God's descendant, then he's just an idiot.

Even without me, those 2 would have defeated them sooner or later. I trust them that much.

That's what a GodSlayer is, a Hero. Receiving absolute trust and meet their expectations is a Brave.

"Renji-niichan!!"

"Ou."

Souichi was keeping an eye on the Demon on the ground but he still raised his one hand to wave at me. To answer him, I also raised one of my hands and went to him.

With *pan* he high fived me. I opened and closed my palm repeatedly to lessen the pain.

……..hitting with full strength. That really hurt damnit…..

"It seems you were in good health."

"That's my line. Also, everyone was really worried you know?"

"ugh……."

I averted my eyes as he looked up at me.

No, well, I guess it was my bad that I suddenly disappeared but.

[Tell him more, Souichi.]

“Eru-san as well. Long time no see.”

[Ah, you guys are so courteous and polite.]

“……..That feels like saying that someone doesn’t stay polite you know?”(renji)

[That’s exactly what I’m saying.]

“Even like this, I do put an effort to stay courteous and polite at all time though.”

Saying that, I looked towards the ground.

The wings were in totally bad shape and both his feet and left leg were bent in an impossible direction. It hurt just looking at him.

“Oi.”(renji)

When I raised my voice, he looked at me with a hate filled gaze.

The 13 GodSlayers.

Even among them, I who had directly killed the Demon God was hated the most by the Demons. I’m completely detested by them. Well, that can’t be helped though.

I am the guy who killed the God they worshipped after all. It's only obvious that I'll be hated.

I lay the jade green sword at his neck. Now that the black Ogre was dead, only 4 of the covenants were cleared—-no, only 3. There's no need to protect someone in this situation now after all.

The fact that the blade had lost its previous shine of magical energy was a proof of that.

"Yamada Renji—-!!"(demon)

"Yeah, I'm Yamada Renji. So, why the hell can a demon like you control a descendant of the Demon God?"

Ignoring is hate filled gaze, I questioned.

I may have done something bad. Killing a God, even if to save the world, may not have been something that should be forgiven. Especially for those Demons who worshipped him.

But, that doesn't mean I'll accept their hate.

I'm not such a great human who can do something like that after all, I'm not tolerant enough for that.

What will you do after saving the world?

Travelling around the world, becoming a bridge between humans and demi-humans might not be bad. I might try to fix relations with the enemy demons as well.

In fact, there are Demons who don't think badly of humans. They are a complete minority though.

"Is Sherfa involved in this?"(renji

The name I spoke was of the Demon Lord. Demon Lord Sherfa. The most influential person on the Abenelm continent next to the Demon God.

A monster that could fight at par with even Souichi who had awakened as a Hero.

When I spoke that name, the demons gaze became even more filled with hatred and glared at me.

"Wa——that naive woman, there's no way she could take such an action!!"

"Oioi. She is your ruler you know."

Well, I agree that she's naive/soft Demon Lord though.

For a Demon Lord, Sherfa does have much too soft of an image. She's always fair and square, hates taking hostages, and she herself said that

she likes humans. After the previous Demon Lord died, she came to us to even brag proudly that she has succeeded the position. But that doesn't mean she was human-like though.

Strength is everything in the Demon continent so whoever is strong automatically becomes right or so they say. She's a type that swing her fist before speaking. Truly very demon-like. She still claims to like humans though.

"Like I care. A demon lord that doesn't try to revive the Demon God-sama can't be called a Demon Lord."(demon)

[Revive the Demon God.]

This is the first I'm hearing of this. I ended up tilting my head at that. By the way he is speaking, it's as if they can revive the Demon God at any time.

"What do you mean? The Demon is dead. Renji-niichan killed —-"(souichi)

"hmph. You think I'll speak all that? C'mon, hurry up and kill me."(demon)

"Hah?"

"There's only death for the loser. I'll be killed if I return anyway."

No, there's no way you'd have won with such military forces in any case, I could only feel amazed.

Even though they're clever at weirdly specific things, their war-related stuff is the same as one year ago.

"As if I care."(renji)

Saying that, the jade sword turned to magical energy and disappeared.

"Aya, I'm done so you can stop now."(renji)

"Yes."

The gravity prison holding the Demon also disappeared with that. Maybe feeling lighter due to the cage suddenly disappearing, the demon also fainted.

Revival of the Demon God eh?

While seeing Aya walk towards us, I sighed.

"Seems like trouble again……I really hate this."(renji)

"Renji-niichan does get involved in all sorts of troubles don't you?"(souichi)

Souichi said that sounding somewhat happy/amused.

As for me, I really, seriously want to be pardoned from all this.

“Trouble comes to me. Also, stop speaking like I intentionally get involved in trouble, will you?”(renji)

“Eh?”(souichi)

“…….huh?”(renji)

[What the hell are you saying suddenly?]

Why did I get a question mark in answer to that? I really do intend to avoid trouble you know? But trouble always seems to find me instead. If this is also a part of the Different world transfer compensation (cheat) given to us, I can only despair.

Also, Ermenhilde’s usual amazed, fed up words was digging into my chest.

Did I do something to make it mad? While I was thinking that, Aya came and stood beside me.

“……”

“……”

"……"

[…..Why are all 3 of you not speaking anything?]

Well, who knows?

For some reason, Aya seemed nervous, so me and Souichi also ended up keeping quiet.

Ermenhilde, as usual, couldn't read the mood at all.

"um, long time no see, Renji-san. Thank you for saving me back then."(aya)

"n, long time no see, Aya. I promised didn't I? That I'll save you if you were in danger."

Saying that, I pointed my palm towards Aya. When I did that, Aya, somewhat happily, also struck my palm with hers making a *pachin* sound.

When we travelled together back then, whenever we succeeded in something or if something good happened, we always high fived. Feeling nostalgic, I also smiled.

I had been thinking about how to meet them and what to talk but with just this, I feel happy that I met them.

“You seem tired but, did something happen?”(renji)

“Ah, no, nothing……..”(aya)

She seemed happy just now but suddenly hung her head again. Did something happen, I wonder?

Or maybe I did something bad?

Thinking till there, I remembered that I had not sent even a letter to her in the past one year.

Is that it? I racked my brain to think of way to talk to her. Aya was still hanging her head down and squirming bashfully while playing with her hair.

Both her height and hair had grown longer compared to last time I saw her and had become more womanly giving her a fresh look. But I feel like I’ll get yelled at if I say that out loud so I don’t.

In the end, we 3 stood like that silently without speaking anything till the other adventurers came back.

…….is such a reunion okay?

Chapter 20 The GodSlayers (4)

Soon after the army of goblins summoned by the demon had been subjugated, we, the normal adventurers, didn't return directly to Ofan and remained to deal with the corpses of the Goblins.

Taking off any equipment that seemed useful, we collected the corpses in one single place. To take care of them at once.

If we had left them like that, wild beasts or some other goblins would have been attracted to it instead. If that happened, we'd have to once again group up to subjugate them again which would be a pain.

[Why do even us have to do this……]

"Well that's, I'm also just an adventurer after all."

[…..haah.]

It's for the people. But even so, Ermenhilde was low on tension.

I have only heard sighs from the morning. Well, it's not like I don't understand its feelings.

Just a moment ago, with Ermenhilde in my hand, we rampaged while fighting a black Ogre that had the atmosphere of the Demon God. My cover was blown. People knew that I was one of the 13 GodSlayers.

But even so, the fact that I'm mixing among the adventurers and dealing with corpses of mere goblins seems to be unacceptable to Ermenhilde. Well, it is the job of amateurs and newbie adventurers. And maybe of vagrants without any job.

But it's fine, right? If I return to the guild right now, I'll definitely get involved in something troublesome.

I doubt anyone would want this kind of tiresome job that I'm doing right now. The reward is good but it's mentally tiring. The stench the goblin corpses give off is awful. In just a day, the flesh breaks apart and the blood starts giving off an incredible stench. Above all, the corpse of the black Ogre can't be seen anywhere but there is a black blotch where it died. And that smells a lot as well.(T/N: The author had written black orc by mistake but I'm pretty sure that's a typo since only a black ogre appeared.)

"You should be fine since you don't even have a nose. Deal with it."

[That's not the problem here! For Renji, shouldn't there be a more..... suitable job?]

"I hate those though."

Above that, I'd prefer easy jobs like dealing with corpses. I'll get a reward as well. Beggars can't be choosers.

[So selfish.....and also, this isn't a troublesome job?]

“I’m just taking equipment off corpses and collecting them in a single place, you know? It’s super easy.”

[I wonder why, I feel like crying.]

“Well, why indeed.”

While answering to Ermenhilde like that, I skilfully removed the equipment from the corpses. We never had money troubles while on our journey to defeat the Demon God but in the past one year, I have been running out of money quite a lot. When I realized that I could get a lot of money by selling off equipments gotten like this, my skill in this aspect increased instantly.

Ermenhilde would get angry saying that such a Hero doesn’t exist but money is more important.

“I’m properly working, aren’t I? This is better than lazing around all day I believe.”

[That’s normal! I’m saying, choose your jobs better!]

“I’m not so great that I’m allowed to choose jobs though.”

After finishing removing the equipment, I grabbed the corpse’s arm and dragged it to the place decided for gathering them all.

After doing this for almost 200 times, even such a simple work really does get tiring. Participating along with me are around 10 more adventurers and 30 civilians of the Magic City. There are even some children here. It must be a chance for them to earn some extra money, I guess.

[If you tell them that you're one of the Heroes, won't you get better jobs automatically?]

"Not interested. I don't want to get dragged into the petty power struggles of nobles due to that. Also, I'm not very Hero-like anyway."

The title of 'Hero' will definitely attract attention.

Even now, the other adventurers are constantly glancing at me while I do my job.

I'm not ignorant enough to not know the meaning behind it but I have no intention to answer to them.

[Seriously….]

Bending beside the next corpse, I began my work again.

Ermenhilde seems to be still muttering something but I can't do anything about that.

4 Deceased, 11 severely wounded, 31 slightly wounded.

That was the numbers of victims that the vanguard had in this battle.

The deceased were all young adventurers, boys who went to the front lines——the ones I had talked to before the battle.

I remembered what I had said to them back then. I recalled the words I used to cheer them up.

‘you guys are lucky’?

The moment you come on to a battlefield, luck ends there itself. To stand on the battlefield at that age, there was nothing more unfortunate than that.

And in the rear guard made up of archers and magicians. 2 Severely wounded, 17 slightly wounded. That was all. Even the severely wounded would be able to return to their normal lives once their wounds heal. Their wounds were of the type that won’t leave any after effects.

They had been ambushed by the Demon. But they had been protected by Souichi and Aya as those two had maintained the front.

……thinking that, I could only sigh.

The gap between me and Souichi. The gap between the weakest God Slayer and the Brave or Grand Magus. The gap between a GodSlayer that cannot gain power without sacrificing others and those who could always

fight at their strongest.

Saying that the level of danger at the vanguard and the rear guard is different is just an excuse. In the end, there were casualties. If it was an actual Hero—-he would have saved those dying boys. A hero definitely would have.

But instead I, let alone protect them, I used their deaths as my own power.

As a result the black Orc was defeated, and everybody started calling me a Hero again.

I was called one even in the guild this morning.

Even so, a Hero like that shouldn't even exist.

[But even so, everyone will treat you as a Hero you know?]

"Yeah and it's a pain."

Saying that, I took off the equipment from the goblin again.

"I just want to casually roam and travel around the world with you though."

[——hmm]

“I think that’s pretty amusing in itself but what about you?”

[Who knows?]

Ermenhilde’s answer was very short and blunt.

After that, I kept on working as both of us stayed silent for a while.

Souichi and the others were currently talking with the mayor of the magic city regarding how to deal with the imprisoned demon.

I think they’d probably transfer him to the royal capital to interrogate him.

There are a lot of magicians in the city but very few who can actually fight. The students of the academy are in the end just students. Experienced magicians would either enter the royal knight orders or set up their own research labs.

With only that level of military force in the city, if the demon were to do something again, even if he’s wounded, it’ll still cause a lot of trouble. Even Souichi and the others are human, they’re weak against surprise attacks. As a result, there were casualties in the recent battle as well due to a surprise attack.

That’s why, they’ll soon send away that demon to the Royal Capital from Ofan.

“A Demon Lord that doesn’t revive the Demon God, eh?”

[——Do you hate fighting?]

The Demon God.

One of the few existences against which I can fight at full power.

The revival of the Demon God is also like the revival of my own raison d’être. I realize what Ermenhilde wants to say but I don’t have the words to answer her.

The GodSlaying weapon that is Ermenhilde and the God Slayer that can literally fight at full power against only a God.

But, if you were to ask whether I want the Demon God to be revived then I can only say no. True, if that happens, I can once again fight as a ‘hero’ alongside my comrades.

But just like that time. In that final battle. Countless comrades had been sacrificed. Those I wanted to protect were sacrificed. Only then was I able to protect the world.

But——

“I hate fighting. It’s scary and painful.”

[I see.]

“I’m a coward after all.”

[That’s true.]

“…….you’re supposed to deny that, partner.”

I hate fighting. So many people get hurt. So many people become sad. So many die.

And above all—-many have to cry.

[I was excited during the fight with Demon God’s spawn.]

“I see.”

[But Renji calls me his partner rather than weapon.]

“That’s true.”

[…….Don’t deny me, Renji.]

Hearing Ermenhilde’s soft complaints, I ended up feeling happy somehow.

Filled with those feelings, I gently caressed the medal inside my pocket with my fingers.

“I refuse.”

[You’re an idiot.]

I nodded in an exaggerated manner.

“I am aware.”

[You’re a complete fool.]

Now then, let’s work hard on my job now.

I, who was working hard even while listening to Ermenhilde’s gentle abuse, might actually be a masochist.

.

.

.

When I returned back to the town as the sun began to set, numerous

shops lightened by magic light came into my view.

While shrinking back in discomfort due to being respectfully thanked by the guards, I wondered about what next to do.

Should I go back to the inn and sleep or should I head to the bar?

While deciding about it, I headed towards the inn for the time being anyway. When I realized a figure was in front of me.

“Yo, Souichi.”

“I have been waiting Renji-niichan. You’ve finally returned.”

[What happened Souichi. To be waiting in a place like this.]

“Well, I didn’t know which inn Renji-niichan was staying in so I decided to wait in a place from where the south gate could be seen.”

Oi Brave-sama, how free are you?

I ended up giving a tsukkomi inside my mind.

“What about the demon?”(renji)

“After that, they sent a fast horse to contact the Royal capital. SInce not just us, even Renji-niichan was involved, maybe Yuuko-san herself would

come to take him.”

“uehh.”

“……She’ll get angry you know.”

That would be bad.

As someone who had been scolded many times by her during our journey, it was a common knowledge that she’s the last person you’d want to make angry.

Well, I’m the one who was always at fault though.

Taking minors to the city’s ‘night life’, being reckless and getting hurt, teaching the kids weird things, *etc*.

I know the reasons aren’t exactly great but I really feel that you should enjoy now that you’re in a different world and all. That hasn’t changed even now.

[Yuuko is really scary when angered after all.]

“She grows horns I swear, horns!”(renji)

“She might hear that you know?”(souichi)

[When that happens, Renji, put me in Souichi's safekeeping please.]

"We'll be together in both joy and pain, right partner?"(renji)

As I began taking with Ermenhilde, Souichi started laughing.

"It's really nostalgic."

I shrugged my shoulders.

I have been doing this for 3 years now. Rather than nostalgic, it's become more like normal for me.

That's why I could only feel out of place at Souichi's words.

"I, for one, would prefer a more gentle and ladylike personality, you know."(renji)

[Muu]

Seeing Ermenhilde harden at just those words, I laughed together with Souichi.

As usual, my partner's fun to tease.

"What about Aya and Yayoi-chan?"

"They're borrowing a restaurant."

"…..There's no need to go that far."

"They're really happy though. Especially Aya."

"Hmm."

[What a half-hearted response. You'll get buried for it someday, you know?]

Will I really get buried for just that?

I doubt she's that short-tempered. Probably.

I followed Souichi as he began to walk while talking.

He's probably leading me to the restaurant.

After that fight, we separated without getting to talk much but it's nice that they aren't saying anything to me.

Well, they'll probably ask a lot now though. What I have been doing till now and whatnot. How should I avoid it? I gazed at the sky while thinking.

It’s not something very cool after all, I have been literally lazing around. But I don’t want to hide much from the children either. I don’t intend to lie but let’s dramatize it a bit instead.

“Please be gentle with Aya alright? If Renji-niichan made her angry, I’m the one who gets the bad end of it, you know?”(souichi)

“That’s sounds fun though.”

“Oh please no…..”

He says that but, Souichi himself enjoys messing around with his childhood friend.

He’s really easy to understand I think. Really.

To the extent where you’d end up wondering whether there’s something more between them than being just childhood friends.

“Leaving that aside, Souichi,”

“Don’t leave it aside…….what is it, Renji-niichan?”

“Don’t I smell? I bathed in goblin blood sprays and was dealing with their corpses as well till now after all.”

“Well now that you mention it, you do.”

[You’re going to have dinner now right? Do you intend to go like this?]

If I actually went like this, not just Aya, even Utano-san will do something bad to me. And I mean mentally.

“Can I return to my inn once? I want to take a bath. Need to change my clothes as well.”

“Yeah. If you went with bloody clothes, I’ll be the one who gets buried…..”

[Well, can’t you both get buried together? Happily?]

Anything but that.

It’s dark, cramped and difficult to breath alone anyway.

[Maybe if that happens, Renji would also live more properly afterwards.]

“Can you please not talk like I’m not a proper human.”

[It’s true though, Renji.]

You say such harsh things, partner.

As I shrugged, Souichi luaghed.

“Didn’t Eru-san get a bit more mellow nowadays?”(souichi) (T/n: mellow and round sound the same in japanese which’ll explain the next dialogue.)

“It’s been round from the very start, it’s a medal after all. You won’t get……fat, right?”

“……Not that way.”

Souichi looked so cute as he dropped his shoulders that I started laughing.

On that, he glared at me with puffed cheeks. His actions are still really childish. Should I say, as expected of a 18yr old kid or should I say, even though he’s already 18 he’s still like this.

“In the beginning, it was more formal, called you Renji-sama, right?”

[……I have no such memory.]

“Yeah, back when it was still pure and graceful.”

[Should I talk about various things to Aya, Renji?]

Does it really want to deny that it ever happened? Well, it’s not like I

want to talk about back then much either.

I was just a company employee and was suddenly being called with a '-sama' suffix. It's an embarrassing memory.

"Talking about back then, Souichi hasn't grown much in height from back then eh?"(renji)

"uu……"

[Don't mind him. For men, it's what inside you that counts Souichi.]

Wow that's harsh in its own Ermenhilde.

Being told that, Souichi only averted his gaze and sighed.

In fact, since his face is also pretty androgynous, if he grew out his hair, won't he look like Yayoi-chan?

"It must be nice for Renji-niichan to be so tall."

"I pretty average I think."

"Then I'm even below average. Even in class I'm the shortest.

[It's fine. I know a lot of good points Souichi has.]

Like I said, you aren't consoling him that way Idiot! I hit Ermenhilde from above the pocket.

I said that to change the topic but Ermenhilde seems to be dealing the final blow instead.

"Well, you'll gain height sooner I'm sure."

"I'm still drinking milk everyday by the way, you know."

So you still are?

"You sure are leading a healthy life. Well then, let's quickly go to the inn and then meet up with Aya and the others."

"……yeah. if we made her wait any longer, she'll get angry again."

[Again?]

"No, it's nothing, Eru-san."

Did she get angry at him for some reason?

Seeing the easy to understand Souichi, I feel bad but still ended up luaghing.

“You sure get along well with Aya.”

“I wonder? Well, we are childhood friends. I can somehow understand what she’s thinking.”

“Well isn’t that amazing.”

When I said that, Souichi looked up at me happily.

“Envious?”

“Well, I wonder?”

[You’re not honest, as usual.]

“Nothing like that, really.”

But——I’m really not envious, I feel that because those 2 have such a relation they can do that.

That wasn’t envy but more……jealousy.

“Well, I don’t have such a person in my life, that is.”

“What about Eru-san?”

“That’s more like we’re just stuck together.”

[……muu]

The Brave who protected his comrades. Trusted by everyone, I held very slight jealousy towards Amagi Souichi.

Hiding that, I teased Ermenhilde to change the topic.

That’s fine.

An adult that’s jealous of child 10 years younger is simply unsightly.

The comrades that fought with me died. Lost their lives.——-only then did I gain the power to fight.

Haah, I sighed inside my mind.

“Me and Aya are also the same, Eru-san.”

[…….That isn’t really consoling, Souichi.]

“It’s payback for earlier.”

I’m envious of Souichi who can smile so straightforwardly like that.

Why is it that you get better at forced smile as you become an adult I wonder?

Or is it that you become an adult when you get better at forcing your smiles?

Chapter 21 Reminiscences of the Grand Magus (1)

Fuyou Aya does not have a father.

Her parents divorced when she was in the elementary grade and was then raised fatherless.

Her mother worked in an average company and also held an average position there, thus she was often late back home. To raise her precious daughter alone, she worked even harder than before. To let her go to a good school, to let her get good education, to buy good things for her.

To do all that, she had no choice but to work. From early morning, till late night. And that not painful for her either. For her precious daughter, Aya's mother believed she could work as hard as possible.

But in doing that obviously, Aya had to spend much of her time alone. The discord between her parents. Quarrels everyday, harsh words, and the fact that they discord had a great effect on Aya's mind and heart.

She even stopped talking much to her friends at school. 'If I ended up fighting them, I'd lose even those friends'. As she started thinking like that, she started feeling fear of even trying to enter a circle of friends thinking she might anger them by saying something weird.

To speak simply, she shut herself away within herself.

Her mother did not realize that because she was looking more towards

her daughter's future than her present. And Aya had been a clever girl from childhood. She ended up thinking that 'if I made mother worry, I'll only cause more trouble'.

She met her childhood friends Amagi Souichi and Yayoi 2 years after her parents divorced when they ended up coincidentally living in the apartment next to Aya's. The Amagis had moved here due to their father's job circumstances.

One day, Aya ended up returning home earlier than her mother. But on that day she had forgotten her keys inside her own room. While sitting in front of her own apartment unable to enter, she met the Amagi siblings.

The boy known as Amagi Souichi doesn't doubt people much. He could be called a naturally good person but from an adult's point of view, his personality could be called dangerous. The place where Aya and Souichi lived was comparatively a safe place but it wasn't like dangerous people didn't live there. Souichi's personality was dangerous enough that he might get easily lured with the temptation of candies by some suspicious person.

His sister Yayoi was better in that regards. From their parent's point of view, they felt that the position of the brother and younger sister might actually be the opposite. But still though, Souichi was the older brother and Yayoi was the younger sister.

When Yayoi was in trouble, Souichi would be by her side. When she wanted something, the brother would always be the tolerant one. Whether it be sweets, or toys. If Yayoi could smile just by Souichi enduring instead, that was enough for Souichi. He was happy with that. Aya was a single child so she was always jealous of those two's

relationship. The reason why she was able to get close to the Amagi siblings so quickly was probably because she saw Souichi closely and could understand him.

On the day she forgot her keys as well, without any doubt, he invited Aya into his own room.

They ate sweets together, drank juice, played games. And after that got scolded somewhat by his parents, though he still doesn't know why even now. That's because he simply believes that if a person is in trouble he has to help that person.

Aya found that natural belief of his to be too dazzling. She didn't have a father. Her mother wasn't home most of the time either due to work. It was probably inevitable that she got close to the Amagi siblings.

Maybe because Souichi had a timid and soft hearted personality, Aya ended up developing a strong personality. By the time they were in the upper grades of elementary school, she started pulling Souichi around with Yayoi everywhere with her.

Souichi and Yayoi's parents also found the children's relationship to be a happy thing. Her friends in school also increased. After that, Aya became prettier than most of the girls her age. Not cuter but prettier. Maybe because her mother was also a beauty, she must have inherited it in her genes. But that didn't mean that she gathered over attention.

Due to her parent's divorce, Aya had become more sensitive towards the subtleties of human relationships. Avoiding anything that might make others hold jealousy towards her, she lived keeping her surroundings in

check. It was an unconscious way to avoid getting herself hated by others but thanks to that, she was able to make a lot of friends.

Especially, the one who opened Aya's heart was Souichi's father. Maybe because she didn't have a father, Aya might be overlapping Souichi's father as [her own father] as well.

But, the one who didn't like that relation was Aya's mother. She worked hard for her daughter, earned a lot money for her only to see her daughter's face. But the one her daughter smiled towards was not her but a neighbour who was practically a nobody.

Few after the divorce, she couldn't stay by her daughter's side only because she was working for her daughter's sake. But to expect a elementary schooler to understand that was wrong. Aya did understand that inside her head but her feelings simply couldn't agree.

Rather than her mother who was away, it was obvious that she'd be more open to the Amagi couple who were by her side always.

There was no discord, but their conversations lessened and the time they spent together further lessened and the time she spent at her job increased.

By the time Aya reached middle school, her mother was practically living at her workplace. She stopped coming much to her apartment.

Aya stopped being in her own room and spent more in time next door. Since Yayoi was also there, there was no problem even if she stayed the

night.

On reaching middle school she began recognising Souichi as a boy of same age. He might have been her first love even. Or maybe she was simply embarrassed during puberty. Aya wasn't sure of that even now.

After becoming aware of Souichi, her eyes followed him and her heart beat faster when she talked to him. Due to embarrassment the gap between them grew a bit. Souichi who didn't really care about that still went close to Aya and often got scolded by her.

When he asked his parents for advice, it was declared that he was at fault instead at which he could only tilt his head in confusion.

The boy Amagi was unable to understand that elementary school and middle school was different. Aya was his childhood friend. A close freind. One with whom he did not want to worsen his relationship with.

In fact, Aya would only increase his distance with Souichi due to that but in the end, well, they lived next to each other. The distance was not more than the distance between souichi's room and Yayoi's room. It was truly a charming thing.

Yayoi would look at those happily and somewhat enviously. She didn't like that her beloved brother only paid attention to Aya but she loved Aya as well. Yayoi who more perceptive in that aspect even more than Aya who was an year older, would often tease Aya.

Aya's relationship with her mother was somewhat complicated but still,

she lived a fulfilling life. Her everyday life was peaceful and calm.

That ended in the 3rd year of middle school. At the end of spring but just before summer truly began. While going to school, she was suddenly struck by a floating feeling. Suddenly, out of nowhere, her everyday life ended.

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For the [Grand Magus] Fuyou Aya, the person known as Yamada Renji was special.

The extraordinary life of being summoned into another world. She was able to handle it because she was together with her childhood friends Souichi and yayoi. If those 2 weren't here, she definitely would have been unable to handle it.

The existence of humans and non-humans. Living together with demi-humans and beastmen that only appeared in stories and legends, in a world infested by monsters. A world not of science but of sword and magic.

For men it was situation that would make them excited. Including Souichi, there were 7 men among the summoned 13. She remembers that 6 of them were so happy as if there was no problem with this.

But at that time, only one was being realistic. That was Yamada Renji. He worried about realistic things like how will the survive in this world, their position and status in this world and whether they'll be able to return or not.

Aya remembers that even now.

In fact he was extremely surprised and questioned the goddess many things about their future. Aya found that to be very mature of him.

Goddess. An existence called as Goddess Astrarea by the humans.

She told them that she wants them to save the world. To defeat the Demon God trying to destroy this world. For that reason, she could give them any power. For that reason, she would fulfil any of their wishes.

That's why, Aya wished. Since she was in another world now in any case, she wanted to use magic. She imagined the miracle like magic that only appeared in stories and legends. Magical energy that won't lose to anyone——not even the Demon God.

That wish was fulfilled and during the decisive battle she was able to do a one on one magic battle with Demon God himself.

Souichi wished for a never losing power and Yayoi wished for a power to heal any wound.

Others as well wished for every power they wanted.

The last one to wish was Yamada Renji. He wished for [the weapon to kill Gods].

That was not to enjoy this world but the power to return back to their world. A power only for that reason.

In actuality, he did recieve the power to become undefeatable against any God. Not just the Demon God, Spirit God or the Goddess. But even against the descendants of the Demon God, Apostles of the Spirit God and priests of the Goddess. That power would work even against the followers of Gods.

For that, he was hated by many. Received the anger of many. And made many enemies as well.

A weapon useless against the monsters, nothing more than a normal weapon, Ermenhilde.

He protected countless with that weapon. That included Aya and the others as well.

He always said that it was impossible to save everyone but yet he was the one who tried to protect everyone the most.

When he was unable to protect someone/something, he would always hide his sadness. At night, in front of the campfire, he would often mourn for it. He was afraid of this other world more than anyone else. Aya

realized that half a year later after coming to this world.

One night she woke up and saw Renji, who was acting as the guard at night as usual, feeling down alone. He had even put away Ermenhilde in the custody of Yuuko.

He was an adult, but weak yet tried the hardest and always held the strongest sense of responsibility.

That was the impression Aya had of Renji. And that was not a wrong estimation either.

Yamada Renji always stood at the very front. Along with the jade coloured weapon Ermenhilde, he kept on fighting at the very front.

To protect magicians like Aya and others. To protect kids like Souichi and others. He always tried to not make others worry. So that everyone could sleep peacefully, he would always take up the night guard duty.

Before anyone knew, that became an obvious thing and everyone depended on him for that.

She could still remember his back.

She had become prideful, she had let her guard down. She thought it was obvious that she had won. At that moment, she had almost died.

Her opponent had been an Ogre like today. Overestimating her own

abilities, she had gone off too far in the front while trying to kill it.

No matter how strong magic she could use, Aya and others were still human. They die when they are killed. (T/N:classic shirou :P) even if Yayoi could heal wounds, she couldn't bring the dead back to life.

There were magic to bring the dead back to life but there were too many constraints to that and above all it was a taboo.

That's why, it was over if you die. It was the same even for the holders of cheat given by the goddess.

That night, she had been so scared she was unable to sleep. Feeling lonely, there were times she had been unable to sleep before as well but that was the first time she had been unable to sleep due to the fear of death.

That's why, she talked to Renji that night. Renji had steeled himself from the very day he had come to this world. He had always been nervous. He understood better than anyone else that death was always by their side. That's why he was the first to move when Aya was in danger.

When she had thanked him for it, she remembers that he had smiled happily at that.

That smile was dazzling, and happy that it was pointed at her, she started talking to Renji more after that. She took advice from him. About magic, about human relations, about herself.

Aya felt that it was due to Renji's personality that you could talk about everything to him. You call that he was simply easy to talk to but Renji would always look at Aya when talking. He would think about her when talking and would worry for her as well.

That, somehow gave the same sense of security that Souichi's parents gave to her.

Fuyou Aya doesn't have a father. At first, she might have expected paternal feelings from Renji.

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(Aya pov)

"How is it? It's not weird right?"

"It looks fine Aya-chan. It suits you. Don't worry."

How many times had I asked that?

As I confirmed it with Yayoi who had helped in dressing me, a tired voice came from her. Am I worrying too much?

In front of the mirror I once again checked my appearance.

It was just the uniform of the Magic Academy but I had combed and even put on some make up as well.

It should be normal for a girl of my age but for some reason I can't get used to it.

I had never put on makeup before because there was no one I wanted to show myself like that to.

Though it bothered me that Yayoi who was younger than me was more used to it. The makeup set that Yayoi brought into my not very big room feels very out of place.

"With this, even Renji-oniisan would be conquered?"(yayoi)

"……I doubt it. Yup. Not happening."(aya)

Why did Renji-san appeared in the conversation there? I wondered but it can't be helped.

Even now, I don't know whether the emotions I have towards Renji-san is love, admiration or affection.

Whether I like him as a man, whether I admire him as the person who protected me so many times or do I simply love him as a fatherly figure, I

don’t know.

But its a fact that the only person to whom I want to show myself with such makeup is Renji-san.

That’s why, for now, this is fine.

“Really? Renji-oniisan is loose with women so it’s not impossible you know?”

“That’s bad in its own way so its better that it doesn’t happen. Yeah.”

True, Renji-san is loose with women. Whenever he’s with pretty women of his own age or even with women slightly younger or older than him, he’d act loosely. I feel I have seen him like that many times.

Also, he even taught weird things to Souichi and other men in with us. He’s an adult yet very childish. But because he’s like that, we were always able to smile.

He made us smile even when we were in pain. After the journey ended, when I recalled the whole journey, I realized that he’d always do weird things to make us laugh again.

So that we don’t get nervous, so that we don’tbreak, he always supported us.

“Also, for him, I’m still just like a younger sister or a

daughter…..something like that.”(aya)

Even inside me it’s vague whether Renji-san is an elder brother, a father or just a man.

I can’t really speak about others I guess. I sighed.

“Aya-chan, you’re really passive with Renji-oniisan.”

“Really?”

“With brother, you’d get close to him rudely and quickly start fighting after all.”

“That’s because Souichi is an idiot. If I don’t do that, he wouldn’t realize anything.”

No, he won’t realize even when I go that far.

That guy’s dense and a total blockhead. Even with the girls in our class, he talks with them only as a friend.

Even though they look up to him as a Hero, as the Brave, as a man. I have such a sinful childhood friend. Well, it’s my job to make him realize these things.

“But that’s good in its own way.”(yayoi)

“I wonder……I have gone through troubles due to that as well. As his childhood friend.”

Just how much was I troubled due to his denseness…….just thinking about it makes me sigh. At first he had even misunderstood and tried to set me up with Renji-san as well.

The fact that he’s quick to act might be his good point but the fact that he takes the shortest way to complete it no matter what it is, is also his bad point.

“We should go to the restaurant now or we’ll be late.”(aya)

“Renji-oniisan as well, why does he have to go and do something like dealing with goblin corpses.”(yayoi)

I agree with that as well.

Renji-san is a hero. To the worl. And even to me as well.

Dealing with goblin corpses is the job for newbie adventurers I think. He should let them do it.

“But, the fact that he works hard even at such small things is……really amazing I think.”

No matter how great he became, he’s been the same from the very

start.

When we had just been summoned to this world. When his cheat was considered weak and he became more of a burden.

To become stronger, he did everything he could. Fighting skills, way of swinging the sword, knowledge, he put his effort into many things.

At first I didn't really notice that but thinking back now, he really was amazing.

We all had something we excelled at but Renji-san didn't have one. He only specialised in fighting gods. Powerless against monsters. But he was still desperate to protect something. He says that he's not a hero but he's the greatest hero of all.

I wonder who said that 'hero' is not a noun but a verb.(T/N: It was Robert Downing Jr.)

It's not a title, a hero is all about his actions.

A hero doesn't call himself one, others proclaim him as one.

"We are also heroes, called as God Slayers but that's just a title."

Right now, we're attending school as students.

Yuuko-san called as the [Sage], said that we're still children and made us go to one.

But Renji-san threw away his title as a hero, threw away the famous sword given to him by the king, and is living only with Ermenhilde in his hands. And that's really splendid.

We hold the title of heroes. Renji-san continues to go around saving people. I feel that it's very like him to do that. He might say other things but in the end he'll always help. That's how Renji-san is like.

Between us and such a Renji-san, which one is the actual [hero]……i wonder.

"Aya-chan, you're always thinking of difficult things……"

"I wonder?"

"I'm just satisfied with the reason, 'Renji-oniisan is amazing'."

"……well, that's mostly what I think as well though."

But I want to explain that in more better words.

You'd think that way right? For the person you hold precious after all.

"Now then, let's go shall we?"(aya)

“Already? Isn’t it still early?”(yayoi)

“I don’t want to make them wait.”

“Aya-chan, you’re the type who’d devote yourself to the man you like, aren’t you?”

“I wonder?’

I understand what Yayoi means to say but am I really like that……who knows?

I don’t.

I don’t really care about that either.

“That or the type that’d lead men around by a rope.”(yayoi)

“…….isn’t that completely opposite of what you said before?”(aya)

“Well, even I don’t know which is the real Aya-chan.”

Is that so? She laughed loudly.

Really, she puts up such a facade in front of others.

Even though she's like this in front of us, in front of the others in class, she's like a young noble lady who only speaks in polite speech.

"If you laugh like that, the number of fans of the [Saint] would decrease you know?"(aya)

"I don't really care. I only heal those who are injured or wounded. It'd be tiresome if they made a sculpture or an idol out of me."

"I agree on that. It's really tiresome if you'd don't have people with whom you can talk openly by your side."

"Aya-chan has it easy. You have brother in your class. For me, my class is….."

After that we talked about classes for some time then rememberred about Renji-san and finally left.

I made a final check at the mirror. Sprinkling a perfume slightly I checked the light scent. This isn't indecent right?

When I asked that, Yayoi made a fed up face.

"It'd be nice if we can hear a lot from Renji-san."(aya)

"Yeah."

Just like before, we'd talk a lot with him.

Just like how we talked in front of that campfire. About me, about Renji-san, about the school, about his journey.

If we talk.....i wonder if I'll get a bit more closer to him.

But—-

"I want to talk a lot."

That person is definitely worried about today, I think.

4 deceased.

We heard of that as well.

We fought with monsters. Victims will emerge. When fighting against the demon god, we had seen many more people die. Tens, hundreds of people had died.

I don't think we've grown numb to it. It's a fact that our hearts ached at those numbers. But, if you get trapped in just that, the next to die would be you yourself. Our body and our mind understands that. Even if there are deaths, we'll face forward. We have no choice but to do so. So that we don't die.

But Renji-san is definitely lamenting over it, I think. Just like that time in front of the campfire. He must be looking downwards.

Because that man wished to protect. But doesn't has the power to do so.

That's why, I must tell him.

What he protected today.

What he protected again.

Thank you very much.

Though you couldn't protect those 4, you protected a lot more.

Chapter 22 The GodSlayers (5)

At the restaurant……or rather, the dinner hall meant for the masses where Aya and others were waiting had very few other customers.

The number of wooden tables were many and were also well maintained. There was also a big piano but it wasn't being played right now so it was pretty quiet right now.

At the counter, a girl of the same age as Aya was taking orders and behind that counter, inside the kitchen, 2 adults, probably the girl's parents were making food.

The atmosphere felt very cosy and comfortable as we 4 sat around a table and looked through the menu. By the way, Aya sat in front of me and Souichi and Yayoi were on the sides.

"It's a restaurant with a pretty great atmosphere. Do you guys come here often?"(Renji)

"Yeah. It's filled with students of our age in afternoon but the number of customers at night are scarce. Since we're quite famous, we come here quite a lot of time for dinner."

"It sure is tough being famous eh?"

"Also, the food here is really delicious. Quantity served is good as well."

[Houu.]

“No, why the hell are you getting amazed for? You don’t even have a mouth.”(renji)

[Muu……]

But, I guess that makes sense. I moved my gaze towards the few customers here but they were all young. They’re probably not even 20 yet.

It’s probably because they don’t serve much alcohol that its not popular with the night crowd. As I looked at the menu while listening to Souichi, I saw that only a few beverages were mentioned.

Even rural villages have 1 or 2 more than this. Thinking that this restaurant is probably aimed at minors—-students, it makes much more sense.

In this world, there’s not really a age limit for drinking. As long as they drink moderately and don’t cause trouble for others, anyone except small children are allowed to drink.

The fact there are no alcohol bottles behind the counter, or any place visible, they must be appealing towards the student crowd.

“But then, don’t you have trouble going shopping normally as well?”(renji)

“It’s not that much of a problem, right?”(souichi)

“It’s probably because brother doesn’t really go shopping too much anyway….If you go to some big merchant’s store, we do stand out.”(yayoi)

“Eh, really?”(souichi)

“Yeah….Souichi doesn’t really care for his appearance and pretty much stays home all the time and only goes to small stores so you probably don’t realize. Our faces are pretty famous.”(aya)

“……I see.”(souichi)

“Souichi, don’t you go to shopping with your girlfriend or someone?”(renji)

“I don’t have a girlfriend.”

Saying that, he dropped his shoulders. And I could only feel surprised at that.

“Really?”(renji)

[Unlike Renji, he should be popular with women though.]

Ignoring Ermenhilde’s words, I looked towards Aya and Yayoi-chan. Aya,

somewhat vaguely and Yayoi with a happy expression, nodded.

So he really doesn't have one.

I looked at Souichi. Androgynous, if I have to change my words, his face is what you'd call pretty for men. His height is slightly shorter than boys his age but I doubt that should be a problem.

His personality is an easily likable one, he is skilled and strong. In my opinion he should be considered superior to others but is he lacking in some specs from this world's point of view?

Or maybe they think he's dating Aya? They're both GodSlayers after all. They both journeyed together and are of the same age. It wouldn't be weird if there were some who thought like that.

Even I think that it would be a natural relationship for them.

The closeness of Souichi and Aya is very vague. Closer than normal friends but a little distant to be lovers. They both call each other childhood friends or close friends but I feel it's slightly different. And it's not like they aren't conscious of each other either.

Well, I have had neither any childhood friends nor such best friends so I don't know what's the correct answer.

"Since you're famous, do they get nervous while talking to you?"(renji)

“Something like that. Since I am a hero, a God Slayer after all. The only ones that come to chat are girls from famous noble families whose names I don’t even know.”(souichi)

“Isn’t that fine? You’ll get to live in luxury after all.”

“Not really interested. I want to become an adventurer after graduating anyway.”

Is that so? I looked at him.

“Just like Renji-niichan, I want to look around the world. With my own eyes.”

“Well that sounds fun. But you shouldn’t try to live like me exactly.”

[Yeah, you shouldn’t really. If you were to start living like that as well, Renji would probably get buried by Yuuko.]

“……..That’s a very plausible future, so really, please don’t.”

I shrugged my shoulders.

That kind of hand-to-mouth livelihood. Earning reward from the guild, eating and then sleeping. After collecting a bit of money, move to the next village.

‘Freedom’ sounds great but it’s a life with no savings whatsoever. There are no guarantee what’ll happen once I became old.

If Souichi actually was to copy that lifestyle, what would the mother-like Utano-san do to me……. Just like Ermenhilde said, I’ll get buried—-it’d be nice if it would end with just that actually.

“Being an adventurer doesn’t suit you, brother.”(yayoi)

“Right. For starters you lack that adult maturity and the awesomeness of an adventurer you need. It’s over for an adventurer if you get underestimated you know?”(aya)

“…..thank you for your frank opinion, Yayoi, Aya.”(souichi)

[Awesomeness?]

What do you want to say? I lightly struck Ermenhilde inside my pocket. While I was doing that, Souichi was feeling down from the two’s comments.

Since he looked amusing, we three started laughing.

“Now then, what should we eat? Have you three decided?”(renji)

When I said that, all three said the names of the dish they wanted.

Leaving aside Aya, Yayoi-chan eats quite a lot. I was surprised. Probably because I didn't really have such an image of her when we travelled together. In fact I was worried that Aya wasn't eating much. Souichi, contrary to his looks, eats quite a lot but Aya also ate a lot .

"What happened, are you not feeling well?"(renji)

"Eh?"(aya)

"No well, didn't you eat more before?"

"Uu……."

When I said that, she hid her blushing face behind the menu. Ah, she's embarrassed, I finally realized.

I ended up saying something lacking delicacy. Deciding not to say anymore on the topic, I called the waiter to give our order.

Souichi and Yayoi's shoulders were trembling as they tried to conceal their laughter and then Souichi alone suddenly fell flat on the table. Probably, he was hit underneath the table by Aya.

[Children should eat more or you won't grow you know?}

"You should shut up for a bit."(renji)

[….wha. Renji that’s rude.]

“Pfft.”

Ermenhilde, you’re the one that’s rude.

And Yayoi finally was unable to hold back and burst into laughter and then a small dull sound resounded. Probably, Souichi was kicked again since his body shivered for a moment.

I could only scratch my cheeks.

“Nostalgic, isn’t it?”

[That’s true.]

As expected, no matter what I say, this atmosphere is really fun to be in.

Souichi and Aya would cause ruckus, Yayoi would laugh looking at that. After coming to this world, we 13 were connected with a weird relationship. Even though they were strangers, they were ones we’d trust the most. Even though we are not connected by blood, we are like a family.

That’s why I felt——that it was nostalgic.

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While eating, we talked about various things. Their school life, my travels, what we did in the past one year, what others were doing right now.

Before we realized, we had eaten everything and then ordered dessert.

As expected, the amount she ordered didn't satisfy her since Aya ate quite a lot of dessert instead. Well, I'm not insensitive enough to actually point that out loud though. It was mature of me to act like I didn't see anything, I think. Souichi who did point that out loud had to fall flat on the table again.

"Really, the beard doesn't suit you."(yayoi)

[So Yayoi thinks like that, what about Aya?]

"Eh, um.....well, yes."

"I think it looks manly though."(souichi)

And for some reason, the topic shifted to my stubble.

Is my beard really worth becoming a topic of conversation? Also, seeing Ermenhilde happy to get more comrades against me is also irritating.

And it seems my stubble is unpopular with both Aya and yayoi-chan. And remaining Souichi, I wonder if he realises that saying it like that changes the meaning behind the sentence quite a lot.

"When I'm in this sloppy look, I look like a normal adventurer so it works in my favour."(renji)

"Aa, I see. So it's like a disguise."

Not just that, it's a pain to shave cleanly as well. This world doesn't have things like shaving cream and shavers so you have to use a knife to do it. That's very dangerous on its own. Many times I had ended up cutting my own cheek or neck instead.

When I started being cautious of that, shaving started feeling like it's a pain and I ended up with this stubble instead. As a result I realized that I was started to be accepted as a normal adventurer.

[I think that he just finds shaving a pain though.]

It is correct. You really do know me well.

Well, I don't intend to accept its true out loud though.

"Even I think of various things Ermenhilde."(renji)

[I wonder how much of that is true…..or rather, it should be normal for a person to take care of his own personal appearance.]

"…….I can't refute that."

Aya and Yayoi didn't like it after all, maybe I should shave properly from now on.

I still find it a pain but the feeling of not showing the children a sloppy me is greater. Since I have been living lazily for the past one year, maybe I should use this as a chance to better my own lifestyle or rather, at least my appearance. I started feeling like that while looking at the kids.

Is the effect of the energy of the youth? While taking to these 3, I also felt a bit more energetic.

"Well, I'll try to be more proactive."(renji)

"That's a 'will not do' flag isn't it?"

"Trust me a bit more, Aya."

"I, I do…. tr, trust you."

Was there something in this conversation to make her embarrassed?

As she averted her gaze and hid her face, I could only tilt my head in confusion. This time I really don't understand. Looks Souichi was the same since he made a puzzled face when I looked at him.

Yayoi-chan alone was grinning happily though.

"Why don't you try and grow a beard as well Souichi? You might look more manly."(renji)

"Re, really?"

When I said that, the Brave-sama looked up at me happily. Will a beard even fit his androgynous face?……On imagining, nope not possible. I averted my gaze from him. There's a limit to how much a beard can't suit a man's face.

If Souichi were to grow a beard, Utano-san won't just stop with me getting buried.

While thinking such things, I became slightly scared. That person really goes all out when she does something. Utano Yuuko-san is that kind of a person. They say a person's name often matches their nature but that's definitely not true. (T/N: Yuuko basically means gentle child)

"It'll definitely not suit brother at all."(yayoi)

"Yup, definitely not."(aya)

[Souichi has a pretty face after all.]

And once again he was completely rejected.

Since I who came up with the idea thinks the same as well, I couldn't support him either. Sorry Souichi, also, Ermenhilde my partner, "pretty face" is not a compliment for a guy.

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After finishing our dinner, we left the diner. The scarlet moon was at the zenith which showed that it was quite late already.

As I breathed out, I realized that my breath was slightly warm.

It's not like I was feverish. But, maybe a little bit of the kids energy was shared with me. I felt like that.

Was it fun? Yeah, it was. I had fun.

Without thinking about anything stupid or useless, I simply chatted and ate with my comrades, with the kids.

I was reminded that it could be this much fun. The time where we don't have to think like a Brave or a Hero could be so calming, we were reminded of that once again.

"Did you eat to your heart's content?"

"Yes. I ate a lot."

"Then, it'd be nice if your height grew a little as well."

"Yes……."

Answering energetically, then soon answering in a small voice, I laughed at such a Souichi.

"Thank you very much Renji-oniisan for treating us."(yayoi)

"As you'd expect, it'd be embarrassing to share the bill with kids after all."

"fufu."

"After graduating when you get a job….then I'll have you guys treat me."

"Sure."

Yayoi-chan, as usual, sounded the most mature even though she was

the youngest.

“……”

And Aya was silent while hanging her head.

She became like this soon after when I said that we should go back. Seriously this girl. I began to think.

“Oi Souichi.”

“Yes?”

Calling him, I threw Ermenhilde to him.

He panicked a bit due to my sudden action but did somehow catch it properly with his both hands.

Probably because he’s living at school now, he’s grown slightly relaxed/careless. Well, that should be normal though.

A life where you’re cautious 24/7 would break you sooner or later. That’s why, this is fine. For that reason, Utano-san sent these kids to school I think.

[What happened Renji?]

“I’ll be back after walking a bit with Aya. I’ll come with you guys properly to your dorms later so don’t worry.”

“As usual, that came out of nowhere Renji-niisan.”

“Don’t mind it, it’s usual right.”

Saying that, I started walking. Ermenhilde was saying something but I acted like I didn’t hear. On glancing back a little, Yayoi-chan was giving a thumbs up. What are you doing? I sighed.

“……”

“……”

Silence.

But there was no complaint against what I said suddenly either.

When I glanced at Aya walking beside me, she was looking properly forward like walking now.

Fuyou Aya. Childhood friends to the Amagi siblings and probably the greatest and strongest magician of this world.

I—cannot understand this girl. Why did she come to talk to me, what did she expect of me.

Back then, I had saved her quite a few times. From monsters, accidents, diseases. From back then, I feel like she has matured a lot.

Just one year. But it was enough for a girl to grow up a lot, I think. Her height has grown from being around my chest to coming close to my shoulders. Her hair has also grown longer and expression has also become more adult-like. Even though she laughs childishly when talking with Souichi, right now her expression is calm.

“Did you grow taller?”

“Only—a bit.”

The conversation ended.

I am good at continuing conversation with people but I think I suck at starting a conversation myself.

It’s different if I have an objective but like now when there’s no such objective in my mind I think I’d be satisfied with just walking around like this. I’d think there’s no really need for conversation.

Moving my gaze away from Aya, I looked up at the night sky while walking beside her.

“Your uniform really suits.”

“Thank you very much.”

It’s not like I had anything to talk about.

But I felt that Aya had something she wanted to say to me.

That’s I waited patiently for Aya to talk . Care freely, while gazing at the night sky. The walk with no destination felt great.

People who live in this world sleep early. That’s because they have nothing to do. The most they have for enjoyment is either alcohol and gambling. But even casinos exist only in the area where nobles live. And even that’s not an actual legal one. Those who like such things might be awake till late but it’d be only us who’d take a walk at such a time.

There was no one around. A quiet time. Walking at such a time really felt great.

“Renji-san.”

Aya’s legs stopped.

I looked at her and our yes met.

“Are you sad?”(aya)

“Yeah.”

Why? She doesn't ask that. There's no reason to ask a question to which you already know the answer.

Aya's talking about what happened during the day.

4 dead. And they were adventurers who fought with me. Lives I couldn't protect.

"I think I'm sad."

".....I, am not sad."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

Do you find such an Aya to be cold-hearted?

I don't. I can't. In fact I feel that it's better this way.

If someone of us 13 died, if someone close died,.....Aya would definitely cry.

But, she won't be sad from the death of 4 whose names or faces she didn't even know. Even if those were men who stood on the same battlefield as her.

And that’s normal. Because if you don’t think like that, you’d be the one to die next. Yes, because we understand that a battlefield is that kind of a place.

They were not sensitive like the 18yr olds of our original world. But, it’s something natural for this world. I’m sure Aya is worried of the fact that she doesn’t feel anything even on someone’s death.

“I was glad that Renji-san was alright…..I was very happy.”

“Me as well. I was also happy that Aya—-Souichi and others were safe as well.”

But I, at the same time, was also affected by the death of those 4. I had made sure to not show it either on my face or in my actions but I guess they realized it. Or maybe, I simply have not matured from one year ago.

It was as simple as that. It’s my bad that I just can’t be satisfied.———-I’m sure that if I stood on the battlefield right now, I’d probably get injured. Without any reason. I’m sure of it.

“Um—-”

Aya’s voice resounded in the stillness of the night.

“Thank you for saving me.”(aya)

“Don’t mention it. I said it at that time as well but I promised you, didn’t I? That if you were in danger I will save you.”

I feel like it was a night like this that time as well. I don’t remember properly, but it was a calm, still night. In front of the fire, I had promised her so.

That I’d protect the world’s greatest and strongest magician.

“You remembered it. The promise.”(aya)

“Well, it was an important promise after all.”

I shrugged my shoulders.

I will protect my promises. That was normal, obvious. And so I, obviously, protected my promise, that’s all.

“Renji-san is the same as always.”(aya)

“I just don’t want to break my promises. At least from my side.”

It’s difficult to keep promises. Even after coming to this world, I broke many of promises.

But, except for in extreme cases——I make sure to not break the promises I make.

Even if that promise is something very small. Even if that is an unbelievably precious promise.

The wind blew and gently made Aya's hair sway in the air. In the darkness of the night, under the light of street lamps shining from magical energy, a pale light non existent in our former world, shone her figure.

"nee, Renji-san."

18 yrs old.

But even so I felt some kind of charm in her expression.

"Thank you very much."

"Yeah."

"I was once again saved by you."

"—-that's true."

Though I couldn't protect those 4, I saved her life.

I'm sure that's what she wants to tell me. I'm minding the death of those 4 too much. Those words come because she's worried for me. Those

words so were gentle, and warm that I ended up smiling naturally.

And then breathed a sigh. This won't do. I'm being worried for by a child. I fail as an adult. I ended up smiling wryly.

What did she think as she saw me like that, Aya smiled like a mischievous child. It was not the fascinating smile like before, it was more of a smile that suited a girl her age.

"Don't cry, alright?"(aya)

"I won't."

She started giggling.

I heard similar words at a very different place once. From a very different voice.

One year ago—-the place I last cried.

"Yeah, I promised Ermenhilde after all."

That's why, I won't cry.

Even if my comrades die, no matter who dies, no matter what I lose.

——because I promised so.

Chapter 23 The Heroes and thereafter

Finishing shaving with my iron knife, I washed my face. Looking at the mirror, my old man face was clean.

It's a face that doesn't give birth to any kind of emotion, a very normal face you can find anywhere.

"My face feels weird."

I mumbled but there was no reply. Oh right, I had left Ermenhilde in the custody of Souichi. I'm not really lonely but feeling this lack of something, I sighed.

Quickly changing my clothes, I left the room. While playing with my iron knife instead of my partner Ermenhilde, I quickly finished my meal on the first floor.

In this world, bread is the staple food. I wish I could eat rice once in a while as well. It's impossible though.

I'm not an expert in agriculture but I know that to grow rice you at least need seeds to plant. We had searched for it even during our journey but didn't find any at all. Maybe it doesn't even exist in this world. Or maybe they are simply referred to differently than just 'rice seed'.

While thinking that, I put a the freshly baked bread, the vegetable stew

and a slice of ham in my mouth. It's pretty heavy for breakfast but this is normal for this world. In turn they spend those calories while farming and other jobs. The people in bureaucratic jobs or nobles tend to be fatter as a result. It must be due to this kind of diet, I think.

While taking water from the landlady, I started thinking about how to spend the day.

Should I go to Souichi and other's dorms to get Ermenhilde now or should I wait and spend time gathering herbs till their classes end.

"…….For the time being, let's go to the guild."

I only had to think about that for a moment.

The deciding factor was that the guild was closer than the dorms. I definitely wasn't thinking of something like enjoying my time while the noisy sister-in-law like Ermenhilde is not with me.

As I decided, I left the inn after finishing my meal.

I should move away from this place pretty soon as well, I thought while walking. I met Souichi and others and was able to talk to them like before as well……I think.

Now that I have completed my objective here, I should travel to my next destination—the royal capital to meet my comrades there and talk to them about these descendants of the Demon God.

My wallet has become pretty filled as well after all.

While thinking that, I reached the guild while swiftly avoiding the way of people leaving for their work.

“Ah, I’m tired……”

While sighing like that, I opened the guild’s door. The double swing door made a noise in the lobby as I entered…….and for some reason everyone’s gaze gathered at me.

No, well, I do know the reason. It’s because I overdid it against the goblins. With the jade sword Ermenhilde in my hands, I fought together with Souichi and others. My identity is probably known by them.

While ignoring the uncomfortable gazes, I took a memo from the request counter. While doing that, my hand touched the girl’s hand beside me.

“oh, sorry.”

“Ah, don’t worry.”

We both apologised and looked at each other. I recognised this girl’s face.

“Oh, well if it isn’t Miss Francesca.”

“Ah, Renji-sama.”

“…….please stop with ‘-sama’ suffix really.”

Saying that, I gave a sigh.

Transparent honey coloured hair, green eyes. Since she was in her school uniform right now, her plentiful chest non-existent with Aya or Yayoi-chan was a feast for eyes.

Her white blouse stuck out contrary to her own personality and the golden embroidered blue robe only made it’s presence more prominent.

“How come you’re here?

“No, well……..”

She’s being unusually unclear.

Going by the fact that we went for the same memo, I guess she’s also after the herb gathering quest.

“Gathering materials for magic or alchemy?”

“Ah, eh? Why…….”

“Well, you were trying to take a herb gathering quest after all. Was I wrong?”

When I swung the memo in front of her, she finally realized as well.

Well, anyone could do that much, I whispered to myself.

“Well, you’re just in time.”

“Yes?”

“I want to contact Souichi but———”

While I was speaking, it became slightly noisy inside the guild.

When I looked to see what was going on, Souichi and Yayoi in the same uniform as Miss Francesca—-the Albana academy uniform, entered the guild.

“Oh.”

“Ah.”

We both raised our voices at the same time. It seems I’m lucky today, I thought that to myself as I raised my hand.

“Yo. What happened? Why here?”(renji)

“We came to look for Renji-niichan. Here.”(souichi)

[……]

“Oh, thanks.”

Taking back Ermenhilde from him, I put it back inside my pocket.

“As expected.”

“Hm?”

“The beard. You look cooler without it.”

“Well thanks.”

I can’t really be honestly happy at that.

Did it really not suit me that much? I actually liked it a bit. As if to once again check the now non-existent beard, I ended up rubbing my chin with my hand.

“Leaving that aside, Renji-niichan, I waited for quite a while yesterday you know?”

“…….that was my bad. After dropping off Aya home, I just returned back.”

[To the bar again?]

“……”

[Rather than taking me back……you went to a bar.]

“It’s fine right, once in a while? There are times when I feel like drinking alone as well.”

“[hou.]

It seems I have angered it quite a bit.

What should I do, I started thinking. Well, it’s mood will get better soon enough though. If it kept on sulking like that, I’d start feeling bad as well. Well, it was actually my fault though.

Well I feel like being alone sometimes as well so it should be fine, right? It would be fine in villages but if I let Ermenhilde alone somewhere in an inn like that with so many people, I afraid it would get stolen instantly.

Yesterday, since I gave it to Souichi coincidentally, I just went to the bar……..maybe because I felt a bit too relaxed after talking to Aya.

While giving excuses inside my head, I thought about how to improve its mood.

“Did you guys come just to give Ermenhilde back only?”(renji)

The noise of the adventurers around us was getting irritating.

This is why I hate being famous. No matter where you go you become the centre of attention. You can’t even talk while standing somewhere normally.

“I’ll come back after accepting a request so can you wait for a bit?”

“Sure, I’ll be over there.”

Saying that, I pushed through the adventurers surrounding us and left there. Ah, irritating. I’ll have to go seclude myself in some rural village again.

[You adulterer.]

“Where the hell are you learning these words?……”

Who the hell was it that taught it these words? Souichi doesn’t seem like he’d say such thing. Was it either Aya or Yayoi-chan?

I can’t really imagine either of them doing so but it should be one of

them.

[Anyway, Renji.]

“Your attitude changed suddenly…..so, what is it?”

[They seem to have decided to send the captured demon to the Royal Capital.]

“Well, sounds obvious.”

[…….You aren’t surprised by that?]

Anyone would get to that conclusion if he were to think even a bit.

The royal capital has 4 knight orders that specialise against monsters, even demons. It’s natural to give something troublesome like a demon to their hands. Those idiots at Strategy(tactics) city would probably get all riled up saying that demons have attacked, so its time to get revenge but the guys in Magic city are slow to act so would definitely hand over something troublesome like this to others.

“And the ones meant to escort it to the capital are Souichi and others, right?”

[Muu, you’re no fun Renji.]

“It’s a serious thing like a demon after all. They’d obviously make them move to be absolutely sure.”

And that demon used summoning skills. Goblins—-and he also summoned that black ogre.

It would be one thing if it was just goblins but that black ogre would be too much for normal adventurers. Well I doubt that demon would be able to summon monsters like that so easily either though. Rather than that, if Souichi and others are going to the capital, I can also stick with those guys. If they’re transporting a demon, it’ll probably be carried in a carriage with barriers set around it. Then the escort will also be either on horses or in a carriage.

If I go with these guys, the travel would also be easier for me. If I were to walk, it’d take at least 20 days to get to the capital. It’ll take half the time in a carriage.

While gazing at the crowd of people going by in front of the guild, I thought about what could be done. If I couldn’t go with them, I’ll just have to walk though. That or I’ll have to take the escort quest from the guild.

“Ah, Renji-sama.”

“I don’t think I have become great enough to need a ‘-sama’ suffix but, what is it Miss Francesca?”

While I was thinking such things, Miss Francesca came out.

I sighed at the usual call of '-sama'. I just defeated a few goblins and one ogre in that fight. Aya, who took doubt countless goblins with just one magic spell is more worthy of being called like that in my opinion. Well, it's her freedom how she calls anybody.

"So, did you take a request?"

"Yes. To collect materials for alchemy at the Forest of Magical Energy."

"Hmmm."

Rather than the request itself, I'm more worried about her getting lost while in the forest.

She did fight Orcs with me back then but somehow she still gives this unreliable, dangerous image. Just like a noble, she has that atmosphere.

"Are you alone?"

"No. I hired a guide just now."

"Then it should be fine."

For the time being, she should at least not get lost inside the forest now. Probably.

As long as that guide is not someone who does something weird. While I was thinking that, another one left the guild.

Gold hair and pointed ears. His sour looking face that I'd become used to seeing still looked handsome.

"Yo."(renji)

"mu, You are……"(T/N: Elf guy uses 'anata-sama' here for 'you' which is very honorific than normal)

His way of speaking changed.

I could only drop my shoulders at that and sigh.

"Please talk like usual. Frankly, the curious gazes alone are killing me already."(renji)

"Fu……I thought you'd be laughing inside while hiding your true identity. So you just find it a pain, eh."(elf)

"Obviously. Trouble is the nemesis of free journeys."

[Without money, even that's just a pipe dream though.]

" You sure say some dreamless things."(renji)

Saying that, I flicked Ermenhilde in the air with my thumb.

As it twirled in the air, I caught it. On opening my hand, it was Heads. Yeah. I have good luck.

“Oh right what happened to your exam?”(renji)

“Ah, yes, I hadn’t told you…..very sorry.”(fran)

“No, no need to apologise. Well, it’s good you passed.”

“Yes…..though, I’ll be troubling you once again I think though.”(fran)

Huh? Why would you cause trouble now? I tilted my head in confusion.

In the first place, the Orc hunting helped me in earning a lot so it wasn’t really troublesome for me either.

When I was about to say that, Souichi and Yayoi appeared from the guild as well.

“Sorry to have made you wait.”(yayoi)

“Sorry, Renji-niichan.”

“Nah, it’s fine. I haven’t taken any request anyway.”

[If I hadn’t come, you were thinking of taking it easy again weren’t you?]

“No way. I woke today with the will to work Ermenhilde. Look, I even shaved.”

[That’s nothing special.]

As usual, my partner continues nagging me.

As I shrugged, Souichi and Yayoi started laughing. Miss Francesca and others can’t hear Ermenhilde so they were making a confused face.

“Did you guys also accept a request?”(renji)

“Nope, we were giving out one.”

“I see. The escorting of the demon to the capital eh?”

When I said that, they both got very surprised.

“Ah, did Eru-san tell you?”

[Yeah but I couldn’t surprise him……..boring.]

“What kind of expectations do you have of me?”

Saying that I put the medal back inside my pocket.

“Maybe I should also take up some request…….”

.

.

.

Now how did it end up like this? I tilted my head in confusion.

Since I had finally met her again I decided to take the same quest as Miss Francesca to gather herbs but for some reason, Souichi and Yayoi-chan are also together with us. When I asked if it’d be fine with the school, the answered ‘yes’ with a smile. It was a smile I couldn’t really trust though. Especially Souichi’s. Later on, I’ll make sure to ask either Aya or Yayoi-chan about his grades at school.

But still, with this over powered force with us, I started feeling sad for the goblins we occasionally met.

After all, those goblins get torn apart along with their weapons and armor altogether. As expected of the Brave who has already defeated the last boss. As expected of the one who, in a sense, has the strongest cheat.

He also held the holy sword with a faint blue magical energy in his

hands. Along with the cheat abilities, let alone me, not even the Elf guy got any chance to do something before the battle ended. It didn't matter whether our opponent was just one or many.

For the time being, we left the fighting completely to Souichi. That was more effective than us doing it after all.

".....this is the power of a Hero, eh?"(elf)

"Don't put me in the same category, okay? I don't even have half the strength Souichi has."(renji)

"Again saying things like that....."(yayoi)

It's true though. I shrugged my shoulders at Yayoi-chan's words.

In truth, though I have never fought against Souichi, I'm sure I'd lose against him in a one-on-one battle. Even if all 7 of Ermenhilde's covenants were released, I won't be able to beat him.

I can only bring out my full strength against the Demon God but Souichi, as long as his will is not broken, can use his full strength against anyone.

His cheat is an extraordinary one even among us 13. Because he's called a Brave, Souichi is that strong. Because he himself wishes to be and live like that.

Though I think it'd be better if he'd just live like a kid his age rather than with some heavy title like that. But he's free to live as he likes. If he himself wishes it, I won't go against it.

"I think Renji-sama is also strong enough to not lose against Souichi-sama though?"(fran)

"No way. If I was fighting alone on the front like that, I can at most take on 2 goblins at the same time."

If I could ambush them, maybe I could take a few more but I can't charge head-on and unmatched like Souichi does. In the first place, it's weird to go and fight monsters alone.

[Renji, I want to cut something too.]

"Why did you say something so violent out of nowhere?"

"??"

Please don't give into your instincts. It's troubleome.

Also, since she couldn't hear Ermenhilde's voice, Miss Francesca looked cute as she tilted her head in confusion as I talked to myself.

"By the way, Aya wasn't with you guys?"(renji)

“Aya-chan had classes…….of right, Renji-oniisan.”(yayoi)

“Hm?”

I always treat Souichi and Aya as a set so it simply felt unusual for them to not be together which is why I asked. But for some reason, Yayoi-chan suddenly asked in a somewhat angry manner. Did I do something? I tried to remember yesterday but couldn’t find any problem.

“Aya-chan was in an extremely good mood but, did you say something to her?”(yayoi)

“Well, we just chatted idly though.”(renji)

“fuuun”

Clearly she doesn’t believe me.

But well, it really was like that. We did just talked about the past and also, I made her worry about me and that’s it.

[So, after dropping Aya off at her dorm, you nonchalantly went to a bar, eh?]

Don’t hold a grudge for that.

There had been times when I left Ermenhilde in my room and went

drinking alone while we 2 travelled as well. I don't think it's that unusual.

"Aya-sama did seem to be in a good mood from early morning."(fran)

"fuun, by the way, what kind of 'good mood' was she in?"(renji)

"Skipping around, and humming etc, basically."(fran)

That's it?

"Aya's usually like that whenever she is even slightly happy."

[umu. She's a cute one after all.]

Leaving aside whether that's cute or not, during our journey she'd be like that whenever something good happened I think.

On improving her magic or finding a rare item *etc*.

Was it really as special as Miss francesca or Yayoi-chan say?

"waa."(yayoi)

"Nothing happened that should make you sigh nor did I do anything like that you know?"(renji)

Saying that, I kneeled on the ground. I found some the herbs we were looking for. It's still far from the amount needed to finish our job but it's still important spirit grass. I carefully plucked it out.

"A crime of conscience is it? Renji-oniisan."(yayoi)

"Well, for a man like me, I don't understand even a fragment of a woman's heart."(renji)

"Hm? What are you guys talking about?"(souichi)

After defeating all the goblins and still not being even short on breath, Souichi came back. Behind him was the Elf guy with bow in his hands. Seeing two handsome men walk together sure is picturesque.

"We're talking about how men can't understand the heart of women."

"Ah, true, Aya gets angry at me a lot for the same reason."(souichi)

"What kind of conversation are you guys having while in between completing a request?"(elf)

[Seriously.]

The serious Elf and Ermenhilde seemed to be amazed at us. He even shrugged his shoulders and sighed. In his hands was Spirit grass multiple times more than mine. He really is one serious guy.

“Since it’s Brother, it can’t be helped.”(yayoi)

“…….That’s very hurting to hear on its own you know?”(souichi)

Well, it is Souichi we’re talking about. He’s the type that always gets too close. So much that you have to push him away a bit.

Although its nice to be honest to what you’re thinking, but it’s troublesome if you’re too honest. Though he seems to have matured a bit from that.

“It’s fine. Brother, you have me after all.”(yayoi)

“Well what can I do with that……”(souichi)

“……”

Really, Souichi has no understanding of women at all.

Well, Yayoi-chan is unique on her own as well though. It seems as usual, someone will have to tell them to be relieved and stuff. (T/N: I kinda took liberty with this sentence since the actual line makes no real sense in english. It’s weird in jap as well tho. Just ignore. Not really important)

I’ll leave these things to Utano-san. She’s a woman as well after all. I have no idea what I should say after all.

“You two really do get along.”(renji)

“Yes!”(yayoi)

“Really?(souichi)

When Souichi said that, Yayoi-chan’s smile cramped. Miss Francesca was also giving a troubled smile.

What is this? Though I had been talking till now as well but somehow this feels more like a picnic instead.

Though the main reason is Souichi being here. After all, there’s no danger. Goblins aren’t even a danger anymore. Other wild beasts also stay away due to the Holy Sword’s aura.

While collecting Spirit Grass with the Elf, I sighed. It’s good to be living like children. Yeah.

“Say, during the journey for the Demon God’s subjugation..”(elf)

“Hm?

On Elf guy’s question, I nodded him to continue after a second.

“Were you guys like this even that time?”

“Ahh.”

No matter how low the danger on this request may be, this kind of carefree atmosphere was not normal.

In the first place, it was weird to be carefree even while goblins come attacking.

“No. That time, we didn’t have such leisure.”(renji)

I remembered the journey which was painful, agonizing and made me cry so many times.

Now, it only feels nostalgic——it has become a precious memory of mine.

“That makes me relieved.”(elf)

“Relieved?”(renji)

When I questioned, this time the Elf shrugged his shoulders.

“If you said that you travelled with this mood and had killed the Demon God…….I would have been at a loss for words.”

“Well, that’s true.”

At that time, we were at our limits every day. We had never done such journeys, we weren't even used to walking for long times.

After being summoned to this world, we were trained by the Knight Orders and were entrusted with the hopes and expectations of everyone.

"But, it's fine now."(renji)

"Is that how it is?"(elf)

"To laugh happily, for such a world, we had worked so hard after all."

After saying, even I felt that it was a foolish line to say. If my former comrades were here, they'd all say that it doesn't suit me saying that at all. I realise that.

I know that there are still many that still cannot laugh.

There are too many orphans in this world. Too many who have lost their loved ones. We saved the world but there are still people that have not been saved yet. But still.

"——I see."(elf)

[umu. That's right.]

On Ermenhilde's words, I started laughing.

Yeah, that's right. That's exactly how it is.

Right now, at this moment, finally, I felt that it was great that I came to Magic City. I was glad to have met Souichi and others. I felt that from the bottom of my heart.

Chapter 24 Road to the Kingdom (1)

The sun had set, and I was walking through the dark corridor. My whole body ached due to the gruelling work I had gone through during the day.

The cold air struck my skin and gave me goosebumps. It was a stone corridor but a first class carpet was laid on it so my footsteps weren't loud. Groaning from the muscular pains, my footsteps were in disorder.

Shelves decorated with expensive ornaments, pretty flowers, knight armours made of silver, and a small light of magical energy. These things came into my view in the night's darkness.

But all that felt a bit scary which made me walk a bit faster. My quiet footsteps became a bit louder.

My destination was the chapel at the end of this corridor. I didn't really have anything specific to do. It was simply a part of my routine.

In that chapel was the statue of the Goddess. It wasn't real nor did it have the Goddess' soul or anything. Made out of silver, it was simply nothing more than a statue.

How long did I walk in that dark corridor? But now finally, a giant door was in front of me. I used all my strength to push it open. Because that door was heavier than I expected, by the time I entered the chapel, I was a bit out of breath.

And finally I was inside. In front of me was magnificent stained glass that decorated the windows and the ceiling. The faint light of magical energy shone blue, red, gold, green, purple.....in various colours even though it was night time. It looked so unnaturally beautiful that the silver statue of the Goddess placed at the innermost part of the chapel looked truly divine.

The statue of Goddess Astrarea.

One of the 3 gods that created this world. Ruler of the light and the one that created humans.

In normal temples, people would think that the bigger the statue the better it was but the one here was of the size of a normal human. Maybe that's why it was beautiful, it felt divine.

I tried to close door quietly but the wooden door made a dry sound that resounded inside the chapel.

It's not like it's not allowed to be here late at night but the empty chapel made me feel as if I was doing something bad.

Just like that, as if being pulled, I walked towards the goddess' statue.

Even though I was walking over the carpet my footsteps made sound. Was it simply the air that was cold or was the silver statue giving off the chill I felt? I didn't know but the mental chill I felt made me want to stop in my tracks.

But I didn’t.

I felt as if I was being pulled as well. Slightly, though.

As I walked towards the silver goddess I stretched out my hand—-but stopped right before touching the statue.

Even though I didn’t touch it, I could feel the heat of my fingertip disappear from the coldness of the statue. As if it was frozen, I became unable to move my finger.

Even though it should be impossible. Giving a wry smile, I removed my finger away from the statue. The silent night was so cold that I could even hear the buzzing in my ears. I was alone in this place. I suddenly became afraid realizing that and turned back and walked away from the statue.

But, just before that, I felt I heard someone calling my name. Was it a ghost? I looked around for one. In the first place though, it would be ridiculous for a ghost to appear inside a chapel. Thinking that, I sighed. Suddenly, I felt that my eyes connected with the Goddess’ statue.

What did I think at that time……..I remember it clearly even now.

——I want to go home.

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.

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When I woke up, I sighed in relief on seeing the worn out ceiling of my room.

Nostalgic——I couldn't even call it that but it wasn't really a good dream that I had.

It was right about when we were summoned in this world. Somehow realizing the peculiarity of my cheat and understanding that I'd be useless; it was a dream of when I was really dessperate.

Learning the art of combat from the knights, reading books till late night and then prayed to the goddess' statue after getting tired.

That I want to return home.

[What happened?]

"Nothing. Just saw a bad dream."

[…….I see.]

It doesn't ask anything more. From my atmosphere, it must have

realized what kind of dream I had. Really, I have a great partner.

Picking up Ermenhilde from below my pillow, I rubbed its rim with my fingers.

“Can I sleep the whole day today?”

[Work. Like a cart-horse.]

“……what a cruel partner you are.”

Laughing, I stood up from the bed. Now then, let’s work hard today as well.

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When I went to the guild, a scene I wasn’t used to was taking place.

As usual , curious gazes from the adventurers were troublesome.

The request put by Souichi and others to take the demon to the capital won't start after a week. Thinking that I'll have to go through this everyday till then, I could only sigh.

From Ermenhilde's point of view, it's a happy thing that I'm the centre of attention but really, I don't want this.

But those gazes were slightly less today. You'd think that they have finally become bored of me but today they were more curious about a very peculiar and rare request client it seems.

At the counter was a white girl.

Her long hair were kept in a ponytail, and her whole body was covered by a white mantle.

Her petite stature showed that she was definitely a girl, her height was a little higher than my abdomen at most. From behind I couldn't see her expression but I could tell that her appearance must be good considering the amount of gazes fixed on her.

Adventurers——or rather, men were such creatures after all. Even I'd always prefer a cute girl.

And above all, the biggest reason for all the gazes was on her head. Animal ears like that of dog and a fluffy tail that could be seen from the hem of the mantle. Going by her tail, she is not a dog-type beastwoman but a wolf-type.

Beastmen weren't really rare. You'd run into some every now and then inside the town. I don't know why this girl is attracting so much attention but, well, I'm not concerned with it. I went and took a memo from one of the herb gathering request lists.

At that time, I didn't forget to steal a glance of her looks as well. At that, the girl also looked up at me. It was sudden, so even I got slightly surprised.

"Need something?"(girl)

"No, I just found it rare to see a pure white beastwoman, that's all."

"I see. You are a pretty honest human."

She's an indifferent girl. That was my first impression.

Considering she sensed my gaze, she must have sharp senses. It's not rare in beastmen though, so it wasn't really surprising.

I turned towards the receptionist woman to find her making a troubled expression. Her usual smile also felt slightly cramped.

"Did something happen?"(renji)

"Well……..she has come with a request but the details are.."

Is there a problem with the details?

Becoming curious at that, I once again looked to my side.

“What request do you have?”

“To take me to the royal capital.”(girl)

Hearing that, I looked towards the receptionist again at which she shook her sideways.

Well it can’t be helped after all I guess. I also agreed mentally.

“It’ll be difficult so suddenly. No matter how much you hurry, it’ll take at least 7 days to get there.”

And that too by making the horse run as if its life depended on it. Even then, it probably won’t be able to run for days without rest so it would atleast take 10 days.

When I told her that, the receptionist also nodded in agreement.

But the white girl in front of me made a troubled expression.

“Can it not be done faster?”

“Not possible. It would be if there was a better method to travel other

than horses but……there are none like that.”(renji)

I remembered the dragon used by the [Monster Tamer] girl. Unfortunately I don’t even know where she is right now.

If it was that dragon, we could reach capital in 2 days. Maybe even earlier. But its useless to tell that to this girl.

“fumu. I see.”

[She has some special circumstances it seems.]

If there weren’t any, she wouldn’t have come to the guild to put a request after all.

Also, don’t sound so happy when someone is in trouble. And, I hate trouble after all. I really want my partner to understand that.

“Are you in trouble?”(renji)

“Yeah, I am. Very much so.”(girl)

Supporting her well shaped chin with her fingers, she went into deep thinking. She must be planning out what to do next from hereon I guess.

The receptionists gaze focused on me. Her expression was pleading me to do something about this girl.

“Are you hungry?”(renji)

“Hm? True, I have eaten only dried meat for the past few days but….”(girl)

“Then about having a meal first. When you’re hungry, your brain won’t work well either right?”

“……mu. But you know, I’m really in a hurry.”

Saying that she seemed lightly irritated.

It must be an important request seeing she wants to stay at the counter even now. At the same time, she also seemed to be irritated due to hunger as well.

“I doubt it’d be different if you think after taking a meal you know? You won’t get an answer just by staying here.”

“Then, will I get one if I fill my belly?”

“Well, who knows. But, at least your brain would work better than when you’re hungry at least.”

The girl looked down while thinking.

I felt that receptionists gaze was urging me to try even harder.

“I see. You have a point.”(girl)

“It’s good that you understand. Then, there’s a diner nearby where—”

“But, I’m broke.”

I was about to introduce her to a nearby cheap yet pretty good place to eat and be done with it but those words instantly stopped me.

When I looked towards the receptionist, she was also looking at me surprised. It seems she had not yet talked about the reward for the request.

“What were you going to do about the reward for your request?”(renji)

“I’ll pay with my body.”

Do you even understand what you just said?

Inside my view, the receptionist was furiously shaking her head sideways. Well, the guild won’t take part in such services after all.

I sighed while thinking that.

“That won’t work obviously.”(renji)

“Why? I may not look the part but I excel at hunting. I have confidence to not lose to any monster.”

Oh, you meant ‘body’ in that sense!

Once again, this time along with the receptionist, I sighed.

[kukuku, what an interesting beastwoman.]

“Oi, you mimidoshima!” (T/N: mimidoshima is a word used for a woman who has lots of superficial knowledge about sex. I couldn’t think of a an english word suitable for that. Got any ideas? Leave it in the comments.)

[I don’t know what that means but I feel like you just made a fool of me Renji.]

And the receptionist who couldn’t hear Ermenhilde blushed maybe because she thought I said that to her.

Shouldn’t you be angry or refute that normally? To blush like that means she must be not very experienced. How innocent.

“For the time being lets have a meal. I’m tired.”

“But, I don’t have money.”

“I’ll treat you one meal at least. I’m tired, want to take a break.”

[What about work?]

Later.

In this situation, I can’t really abandon this white girl.

“Is it fine?”(girl)

“Yeah. We can think of a solution together while having a meal. We might be able to come up with a good idea.”

“umu. You’re a good man it seems.”

On being told that, I didn’t feel any bad vibes from her.

It will hurt me slightly in the money department but, well, helping people like this may be fine once in a while. Though I wonder whether it can actually be called as helping her.

“It’s my hobby to do one good deed every day.”(renji)

“That’s a very good thing.”(girl)

[This is the first I’m hearing of this.]

Because it’s the first time I said that. If there really was a person who did a good deed everyday, that person would be called a saint.

“What’s wrong?”

While I was talking about that, a voice came from behind.

Turning back, I saw a girl with a somewhat dazed expression and a a handsome elf standing there. It’s Miss Francesca and Faylona(elf). I hadn’t noticed them since I was focused on my conversation.

Maybe because they have good compatibility, they seem to party together a lot. As a party of an handsome guy and a beauty, they do gather attention as well.

“She seems to be in trouble.”(renji)

I pointed to the white girl with my gaze.

“Yeah, I’m very troubled right now.”(girl)

“……is that something to say as if bragging?”

Faylona said that with a somewhat amazed voice.

“I’m not bragging.”

[To me, she simply seems brazen.]

Well, it sure is not something one says while puffing their chests after all. I agreed with Ermenhilde.

“Anyway, I’m hungry.”(girl)

“I get it I get it. After talking about food, now you’re focused on that?”(renji)

“I’ve been eating nothing more than dried meat and grass for a long time now.”

“Isn’t that amazing. Sounds great for the body.”

When I said that, she puffed her chest proudly for some reason. I’m not complimenting you.

“Why don’t you two also join us? It’s a bit early for lunch though.”

“Well sure. Since you have invited us, I want to come along.”(fran)

Saying that, Miss Francesca looked at Faylona.

“We haven’t even taken a request yet. Do as you wish.”(elf)

“No, I am asking you to come as well.”(renji)

“…..I see.”

Somehow, this guy is stupid in the weirdest of places.

When I looked at him with an amazed gaze, he showed a disappointed expression.

“Well, fine. Then, let’s go to the nearby restaurant.”(renji)

“umu. I leave it to you.”(white girl)

[Is that the attitude of someone being treated to a meal?]

I agreed with Ermenhilde’s words.

Well, her personality isn’t really that troublesome. After we find a solution to her request, we’ll part ways anyway.

I hate trouble after all.

Saying that inside my head one more time, we left the guild. Our destination was 2 blocks away from the guild.

Since its main customers are adventurers, its menu mostly has energy filled dishes and lots of alcohol.

And there are many who drink even though its midday. Maybe because Miss Francesca wasn't used to such places, she seemed to be looking around curiously which looked amusing.

[Don't start drinking, alright?]

I don't have a hobby of drinking during the day. While listening to Ermenhilde, I sat down randomly.

Around the circular table, the white girl sat to my left, Miss Francesca to my right, and Faylona to my front.

Handing the menu to the white girl, I sighed. How did it end up like this. It might be too late for this, but I gave a sigh due to the unexpected expenses.

Just when my wallet had finally gotten a bit thicker. It made me realize that I was really too lax with my money.

"I'll pay for my part."(elf)

"Obviously. I have no intention of paying for men."(renji)

"How harsh."

"Like I care."

[You're just too soft with women……]

Could you stop talking like I'm some kind of guy who is loose with women?

I still decide whether to treat or not depending on the person.

"Now then,"

I looked towards the white girl who was focused at the menu. Realizing my gaze, she looked towards me.

"What happened? I haven't decided what to order yet."(girl)

"At least tell us your name. I am Renji."

"From there…….? I am Francesca Barton."

"Faylona."

"mu. To not have told my name to the one treating me, I have been rude. My name is Mururu."

"I see."

[.....It seems like you're being treated as just a purse Renji.]

Yeah, I'm definitely being treated as just a purse here.

What's up with this girl really. I could not decide how to interact with this type of a girl.

Would it be okay to get a little angry or should I just let it go? Miss Francesca was also giving me a troubled look and Faylona had a sour face as usual.

"Alright, I've decided."(Mururu)

"She really works at her own pace....."

Sighing, I told her order to the waiter. But still, its all meat dishes, that too, 2 of them. Can she even eat them both? Frankly, her body is small. When compared with Miss Francesca, her smallness is further emphasized.

"I'm the one paying, don't you leave any leftovers, alright?"(renji)

"There's no problem. I can actually eat double that amount."

A glutton with that small body?!

"Who orders 2 dishes when being treated by another in the first place?"

“I’m really sorry for that. Really, I am but……frankly, when I thought of a dish other than dried meat, I couldn’t help myself. Really sorry, Renji.”

“……..Dried meat isn’t a ‘dish’ in the first place..”

[Seriously.]

I also nodded.

“Well, don’t mind it. I did say that it was my treat. I won’t break my promise.”

“You really are a good guy.”(mururu)

“Oh please. I just find everything troublesome.”

[Are you embarrassed?]

I’m not. Hitting Ermenhilde who said a weird thing, I made it shut up.

“Now then, Miss Mururu—-”

“‘Miss” is unnecessary. I may not look like it but I’m a full fledged adult.”

She puffed her chest proudly at that but her body is covered with a

mantle so I can't tell how grown up she actually is.

"Alright, then Mururu, what is your request? While being broke, that is."(renji)

"Well, there are some deep circumstances behind it."

"Circumstances?"

"umu. A few days ago, I saved a few adventurers on the highway but later that night, my purse got stolen."

There's nothing deep about that, in fact, that's way too simple to understand.

She got betrayed after helping them. Unable to say anything, we three could only remain silent.

"Well, I wasn't really mindful about my own money after all."

"It's amazing how you were able to travel like that."

It couldn't be helped that I sounded almost sarcastic/amazed there.

Money is essential when travelling after all. It's really weird to hear that you weren't really mindful of that.

Well, I'm in no position to say that though.

"How cruel…."(fran)

"No, it was my ineptitude that I was unable to see through their true nature. Even though my parents always told me to be always suspicious of others."

"You, still came along with Renji so easily even now."(elf)

"…….You're talking as if I'm some kind of villain, you know."

"Why don't you put your hand on your chest and think again?"(elf)

[Well, you hid the fact that you're a Hero after all.]

Oh that. I'll say this as many times as you want but I'm not worthy to be called a hero.

I don't have the honour that Souichi or Aya have. Thinking that, I breathed a sigh. Well, that guy's not really serious either, he's grinning after all. Must be enjoying teasing me. What a bad personality.

"Mu……"

But, when he said that, Mururu's gaze turned towards me. Her gaze contained a hint of surprise as well.

“Will Renji also deceive me?”

“If I was planning to, I wouldn’t treat you to a meal, neither would I invite these two.”

If I wanted to trick her, I would lie and then lead her to some back alley. Of course, I have no such hobbies though.

“But well, it would be for better if Mururu was a bit more cautious of people.”

“I see. If Renji says that, I will think about it.”

“Why did my name come up there?”

“Because you treated me to a meal. I have been taught to always take the words of my benefactor sincerely and seriously.”

“Well, you’ve been taught well it seems.”

“Umu.”

Oh, we digressed from the topic. I did an *ahem*.

“So, why do you want to go to the Royal Capital so quickly?”

“I have something to deliver to the witch at the Capital.”

“Witch—-The Sage, eh?”

At that, Miss Francesca and Faylona’s gaze landed on me. Mururu made a confused face at that but I simply shrugged my shoulders and turned their gazes aside.

[You won’t come out honest there, which is why you were talked to like that by the Elf.]

“It hurts my ears.”

But still, something for Utano-san eh?

Honestly, I can only have a bad premonition about this. I recalled the black Ogre and Orc I fought.

Why I wonder? It’s just that the moment I heard Utano-san’s name, I could only think of that. I can trust my intuition at such times.

“What is this thing you want to give?”(fran)

“That, I cannot tell. The Spirit God has told me to not show it to anyone except the Witch. I apologise.”

I see, that makes sense. Also, for the Spirit God to have given it, it must

be something very important.

Once again, their gazes turned to me but I looked at the ceiling wondering what to do.

[A request from the Spirit God, eh?]

“It’s not a request.”

In the first place, I haven’t decided whether I’d accept this or not.

“That’s why, Renji, is there really any way to get to the capital as soon as possible?”

“I said this before as well but it’d be impossible so suddenly. No matter how fast you go, it’ll take atleast 10 days.”

“I see.”

Even if you get disappointed like that, even I can’t help it.

While we were talking, finally the dishes we ordered arrived.

“For the time being, let’s fill up our stomachs. Your head won’t work properly empty stomach after all.”

“umu, that’s true.”

But still, an item from the Spirit God.

On hearing the word, Spirit God, I recalled the [Elfreim] continent.

This Imnesia continent where humans live is pretty green but Elfreim is even greener. Compared to how humans live by clearing away nature, the beastmen and demi-humans live together with the nature.

That's why it's the country of the Demi-humans and Beastmen but the rich and impressive beauty of the continent is so great that you cannot forget it once you have seen it.

And the Spirit God is the one worshipped by its people. Such an existence was sending an item to a God SLayer. It's suspicious, or rather, it'll definitely lead to some trouble.

"……waa."

While looking at the white girl stuffing her cheeks full of food energetically, I thought about what to do.

There's also the request with Souichi and others to take that demon to the capital as well but that's 10 days later. It's not much, but this girl probably won't accept it.

Also, riding just horses instead on a carriage should lessen the trip by few days. The problem is that this girl is broke.

I can't exactly say 'alright, farewell.' And just go away now either. Well, I can, but after that I won't be able to sleep properly.

"Um, Mururu-san? You should eat a bit more calmly or its dangerous you know?"(fran)

"There is no problem."

"I'm the one treating so how about at least tasting the dishes properly before swallowing."(renji)

"Got it."

Seeing the difference in treatment between me and Miss Francesca, we both started laughing. Because she has a small body, she actually feels like some small animal.

"If it's the words of the Spirit God, then I shall help as well."

And, Faylona who had been quiet till now also spoke up.

"Really? I'm in your debt Elf."(mururu)

"It's Faylona, beastwoman."

Are they getting along with each other or not?

And, somehow the talk had advanced. Well, for an Elf, a request from the Spirit God would be very important I guess.

While seeing these 2's exchange, Miss Francesca was giggling while hiding her mouth with her hand.

[But still, do you think they'd leave a request from the Spirit God to just one beastwoman?]

Well, who knows. Did the oracle/divine message include that as well or is there some other hidden reason? Maybe there's someone moving from the shadows as well. It could be that my meeting with this girl was not just some lucky coincidence as well.

Chapter 25 Road to the Kingdom (2)

In front of me, a white fluffy tail was swaying.

Mururu was sitting on a chair without the cloak she had been wearing so her healthy legs, her butt covered with short-pants like trousers and the tail coming out from it was really tempting to the eyes.

In front of Mururu was the guild's reception counter. She must be worried about whether the request we put up will get accepted or not.

"You should calm down a bit."(renji)

"It's difficult."

[She's like a little kid.]

Really. I agreed with Ermenhilde.

I put up the request in my name but it'll probably be just me, Mururu and Faylona who'd go to the capital. Miss Francesca is a student after all and I can't make a noble's daughter hurry towards the capital anyways.

We were few but since this concerned the Spirit God, we needed to hurry.

At least that's what Faylona decided. Right now, he's out shopping with

Miss Francesca to prepare for the journey.

We tried putting up a request at the guild hoping to get a magician to join us but well, I doubt anyone would come forward.

No matter how well spread my name was, there won't be anyone who'd take part in an escort to the capital for almost free. At times like these, practical things like money are more important tha something like the title of a Godslayer or Hero.

There's a limit to how much money both me and Faylona have and also, even if it was the request of the Spirit God, one wouldn't be ready to spend all his savings for Mururu who was just an acquaintance. Even after this request was completed the fact that Mururu was penniless wouldn't change. Since there was no reward, it'll only create problems for her own livelihood later on.

"I hope we can get some comrades."

"Well, yeah."

Saying that, I flicked Ermenhilde with my finger.

It flew in the air raising a dry sound and when I caught it——it was Tails. I figured as much.

From that sound, Mururu turned towards me. Her wolf ears were twitching which looked really amusing.

“What are you doing?”(mururu)

“Test of luck.”

“I see. I hope you get a good result.”

And then, she smiled like an innocent child. In a sense different from Ermenhilde, I once again felt that she really was a child. After showing me that smile, she once again turned towards the counter.

Her white tail pushed up her cloak and revealed her beautiful legs hidden beneath it.

Giving a sigh, I turned my gaze towards the memos of the accumulated requests of subjugation quests. I was only looking at them to pass time but I thought maybe I should accept one seeing that my wallet was getting empty. Also, I want to know how skilled Mururu is in battle. For a beastwoman who travelled alone, she should be pretty skilled.

This world is pretty convenient only at such times. You can earn quite a lot just by hunting monsters. A stronger the monster, the bigger the reward as well. And that doesn’t take a lot of time either.

“Well, don’t have too much expectations though.”

“But I want to.”

I guess this is the first time she's travelling like this. After I treated her to a meal, she has been looking around everywhere curiously. Everything's new to her here after all. I can tell from observing her.

Beastmen——Werewolves like Mururu, there are others with characteristics of tiger, bear, or rabbit as well. They were not one single species like Humans. They were a community made of a diverse types of species.

The biggest difference between Beastmen and demi humans or humans was that they didn't utilise money. They depend on bartering instead. That's why this girl neither panicked nor got angry even after having her money stolen. Even now, she thinks that someone would definitely help her.

This is why even though there is trading between Elves or Dwarves and humans, there's not much interaction with beastmen. The flow of money was important to the society after all. Profit from every transaction would further enrich the country and that would in turn make the lives of the people better.

True, bartering and trust in your neighbours was also important but that alone won't develop the society.

That's why, unlike with the demi-humans, there was not much interaction with Beastmen. The Beastmen really come out of their world, in a way they were self sufficient. There were some who'd come out due to their curiosity towards the outside world or due to some job like Mururu, but they were the minority.

——or that's how I saw it, to be exact. Well, my opinion has also changed quite a lot in the previous year as well. There were a quite a few Beastmen in the Magic City. I can see them sometimes while walking around the district. Going by the trend, there might be others at the other cities and the capital as well.

I guess the world also changed. While I had retired into the rural countryside.

[How carefree. I'm more worried about what she has to deliver to Yuuko you know.]

Well that's true, I guess.

The relationship between the Goddess and the Spirit God wasn't bad per se, but it wasn't good either.

During our journey, at first they were even hostile…….well not really, but there was discord. There were times we ended up fighting their priests and got injured as well.

For that Spirit God, to have sent something to Utano-san who was an apostle of the Goddess was strange. Well, it must be something troublesome for sure, my instinct told me.

In the first place, this 'request from God' itself sounds suspicious. First we got the 'request' from the Goddess to subjugate the Demon God and had even more unreasonable demands during the journey. For me, it's only normal to get vigilant.

While I was thinking about such old things, the guild's swing door creaked open and Miss Francesca and Faylona came back. The guild became a bit noisy from the appearance of the beautiful combination's entrance.

"Yo, how was it?"(renji)

"For the time being, I asked for food for 10 days. It'll be readied by tomorrow."(elf)

"Then, what remains is transport, eh?"

Food for 10 days. Even if its just Dried Meat or other such preserve able food, it'll be quite heavy. We'll need horses.

In case of horses, though it depends on the quality, we'll need gold coins than copper. (T/N: reminder that in this world Silver>gold>copper) Obviously there are no cars in this world, and the only means of transport is either horses or carriages. Obviously the price gets higher in that case. Not to mention we'll need at least two horses. And going by the rates of Magic City, my wallet's going to be empty. Faylona's wallet would also have been used up from ordering the food.

Sighing, I stood up. No matter how much I try to save, it soon gets spent somewhere. I felt like crying from that fact.

Then just abandon this, is what Ermenhilde would say but the Witch of the Capital–Utano-san, now that her name has come up, I can't feign

ignorance now either. If I had ignored her when I saw the white girl at the counter, I would've been free but now that Utano-san's name has come up, I can't……that's how bonds work I guess. I end up feeling like I have to do something as well.

Well, Ermenhilde being Ermenhilde, knowing that I won't be able to abandon her anyway but still said that means it really has a bad personality. Remembering her figure from the back standing in front of the counter, I couldn't help it. As an Adult, I couldn't just abandon a child in trouble.

"Sorry but, can I ask you to have the horses readied as well?"

"Yeah, no problem."

Saying that, I stood up at which Mururu's gaze turned towards me.

"Going somewhere?"

"You're coming too. What will Miss Francesca do?"

"Me?"

"We're going to make some earnings. Mururu, let me teach you a bit of how money works."

I said that but she only twisted her head in confusion.

Feeling worried about our future, I could only sigh as I dropped my shoulders.

It would have been fine if she was living in the beast world, but now that she has come here, she'll have to learn how money works if she's going to live with humans.

I don't know how much money was stolen from her but she really must have been easy prey for the robbers.

"By earning, are you going to subjugate monsters?"

"That's right. We don't have much time so we'll just find some easy prey at an easy place."

Saying that, I swayed the memo in my hand.

Monster subjugation. Our opponent will be goblins that can be found nearby. This can also be completed quickly as well. Since we are supposed to leave tomorrow, I don't want to face monsters that would tire us.

Truth be told, I just want to depend on Herb gathering but considering Mururu's personality, that'd be difficult. This girl really hates waiting after all.

"Money?"(mururu)

“Yes, that’s right. In the human world, you aren’t called an adult until you start earning on your own.”(renji)

“…….I see..”

“That’s painful to my ears.”(fran)

[Being half-a-man actually might be better in such a case then.]

Ermenhilde said that but even I think that way. It’s weird since I was the one who said that but that’s painful to my own ears as well.

Mururu made a surprised expression and Miss Francesca made a sour face.

Mururu’s one thing, I think Miss Francesca would be able to earn by herself though. Well, her very first goblin hunt might have become a trauma for her. She almost died after going hunting alone after all, she must have recalled that.

“Leave the horses to me.”

“Yeah. For the time being, let’s just earn Mururu’s lodging fees at least.”

Right now, she’d have no choice to either stay with me or spend the night with the Elves in the forest.

I am one thing, but Elves are usually not very welcome to other races. Faylona could even be called an unusual case. Thinking such things, I gave my wallet to Faylona. Aah I wonder how much will it cost. No matter how much I earned after coming here, I doubt it'd be enough to buy a few horses though.

"C'mon, let's go."

"Un, Got it."

"Yes."

It seems, Miss Francesca is also coming with us.

It'd be easier with a magician so frankly I'm relieved.

[As expected, it's easier living along with people.]

I was slightly surprised from the sudden words.

It's rare for Ermenhilde to say something like that.

[Like this, Renji is going on a monster subjugation quest due to the influence of people.]

"Please stop talking like it's a good thing. I don't like either fighting or monster subjugation."

It’s dangerous, it hurts when you get injured and you might even die. And it’s the same for my comrades as well.

That’s why I want to live carefreely while gathering herbs only. But the world is cruel, before I realized I was going on another monster subjugation quest.

Hunting the black Orc with Miss Francesca, and that black Ogre and the army goblins. And that Demon as well. I am working a bit too much recently. Just when I thought I could finally relax, this time I have to escort this white girl to the capital. Because the witch of the capital—Utano-san is involved, I’ll feel bad to abandon her.

“What happened suddenly?”

“My chatty friend said something strange.”

When I answered that Mururu who came up to me and asked what happened, she made a puzzled face and looked up at me.

Well, it’s a normal reaction considering she can’t hear Ermenhilde. Maybe because Miss Francesca remembered how she was the same back then, she started laughing.

“Renji, you’re strange.”

“I’m told that a lot.”

[……..and everytime you're told that, I wonder, is it really fine like that?]

Well not really but it's better than being relied on as Hero.

Even if you expect something Heroic from me, I have very few things I can do. I can only fight. That too, only a bit stronger than normal adventurers.

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Along with Miss Francesca and Mururu, I left the district. There's not even a need to look for goblins. They'll appear themselves as long as you go a bit away from the highway and into the grasslands.

Normally, that is. Today, it was a bit different. The existence of Mururu lessened the difficulty of the goblin hunting quest.

"There. Found them."

"Amazing, Mururu-chan."

"…..this much, even children at the village can do."

She said that but she must be happy to have been complimented since her tail was swaying energetically underneath her cloak.

On looking to where Mururu told, I could confirm 3 goblins with my sight. Mururu was finding them so easily because of her sense of smell. It could be said as one of the special abilities of Beastmen.

Beastmen's physical abilities exceed us humans or demi-human's abilities by a huge gap. It's the same with the sharpness of the 5 senses as well. Their arm strength, leg strength etc are also in a different level. And they're like that from when they're children as well. An adult beastman is in a totally different level. On the other hand, they cannot use any kind of magic at all. It's not like they don't have magical energy, yet they can't even use spirit magic. One theory suggests that they're using all of their magical energy in enhancing their physical abilities which is why they are so physically strong.

While crouching and hiding among the waist-tall grass, I was astonished at their physical skills.

"Even though you have a small body, you really are full-fledged beastwoman."(renji)

"I have even completed the ceremony for becoming an adult after all."

Saying that, she puffed her chest somewhat proudly. It was so childish it

felt really cute. Why do feel so happy seeing her I wonder.

Unlike Demi-humans, beastmen have a life span similar to humans. Going by her looks, she should be about 14 yrs old. Now that I think about it, Souichi and others were also around this age when we were summoned.

"Mururu-chan is treated as an adult among Beastmen already?"(fran)

"That's right. The ceremony of adulthood for beastmen is not conducted by age but by physical strength. Winning against specific monsters, gathering materials, by doing such things you have to gain the approval from your comrades to be accepted as an adult."

The ceremony of adulthood. It's not age based like with humans. It differs with each race but mainly it involves defeating monsters alone. Those not suited to fighting are supposed to gather some specific material instead. The monster involved in such subjugation is usually either goblins or Orcs so Mururu should be used to fighting alone against monsters of that level.

As I explained that, both looked at me surprised.

"You know a lot."

"I have also gone through that ceremony. Well in our case it was not to be acknowledged as an Adult but to be acknowledged as a comrade instead though."

It should actually be said that we got dragged into doing it to be exact.

On the Elfreim continent, to gain their trust we were asked to hunt the monster that was said to be the master of one part of the forest. As expected, I didn't do it alone but with Souichi and others.

Later on we were told that normally you don't face such boss-class monster but have to fight mere goblins usually. Basically, rather than ceremony, we were simply used to get rid of their troubles.

"Is that so?"

"I may not look like it but I have lived a HARD.....hard life after all."(T/N the caps are because Renji says it in English at first then realises that they won't get it so switches to jap.)

[Seriously.....]

For some reason, Ermenhilde made a tired sigh. Well, I really am spending a hard life. From a normal salaryman to saving the world.

If I kept on thinking in that direction I'd get depressed again so I gave a sigh and looked towards the goblins who had yet to sense us.

"Will you be fine with Goblins?"(renji)

"Yeah, no problem. I can take even more.....even 5 of them pretty easily."(mururu)

“That’s reassuring.”

She must have realized what I meant to say since her atmosphere changed.

Her small body wrapped in the cloak felt like it became bigger. Her careless, gentle looking eyes suddenly turned dangerous and shined. Her legs got covered with white fur completely. Probably, her arms beneath the cloak are the same.

Battle stance. I looked towards the goblin again, it seems they have still not noticed us but are looking around probably due to sensing a strong presence in the surroundings.

Miss Francesca was also surprised from the sudden change in Mururu. I wonder if they teach the ecology of beastmen in Magic Academies? Even if they do, there still won’t be any magician who won’t get interested in seeing this first hand.

“Can I hunt them now?”(mururu)

“That’s the job.”

“Got it.”

Answering lightly like that, she ran at an incredible speed towards the goblins.

[Will she be fine?]

Well, who knows. I took this request to check that as well. We will travel together from hereon after all, I need to know how well can she fight, what things she can do.

After seeing her enjoying back off, I tuned towards Miss Francesca next.

"Was it your first time seeing a Beastwoman?"

"Ye,s……..at first I thought they won't be much different from humans."

"They only look similar. Except for the ears and tail that is."

But when they enter a battle, they completely change.

From faraway, I heard a *gii* screaming sound.

When I turned to look there, Mururu had already taken down one of the goblins. That said, I can't really confirm. I could only tell that because the 3 goblins I could see from this faraway had lessened to two.

Then, the white shadow that Mururu jumped to an incredible height and lunged at the next goblin.

The last one disappeared into the grass just like that. It was probably

pulled and knocked down by the beast called Mururu. That fighting style was truly befitting a beast.

I breathed a sigh at the sudden turn of events and Miss Francesca seemed to be at a loss for words.

“Amazing.”

I could only say that.

Frankly, she might be stronger than me at such a young age. I felt like I’d lose confidence again.

Whether it be Souichi and group or her, why are the children around me so strong? Do I even have any position/status here?

“She’s amazing.”(fran)

“Yeah.”

Saying that, I walked out of the grass I was hiding in.

Mururu was waiting there, untainted with any blood, for us to get there. Even though she’s a close combat fighter like me, how good is she to avoid getting any blood on her, this white girl?

The dangerous glint in her eyes was gone showing that she had calmed

down now. But underneath the fluttering cloak, her arms were not thin ones like a normal girl but were covered with pure white fur till her elbows. And even more unusual were the 4 knife like long claws growing from her hands. Right now only her right hand had undergone the transformation but normally both of her hands should be like that.

That appearance was definitely not of a human. It proved that this girl belonged to a completely different species, the Beastmen.

Miss Francesca beside me gulped but as someone even slightly used to seeing beastmen, they'd find this pure fight girl to be extremely beautiful instead.

A sublime, noble beauty that humans can never possess. Coupled with the strength she showed just now, it made her look extremely charming.

"All that's left is.."(renji)

Hiding my emotions, I drew my knife from its sheath. Opening the mouth of the goblin that Mururu defeated, I cut off one of its fangs with my knife.

"If you take this back to the guild's reception, you'll get a reward in return."

"That's Renji's job?"

"Not just me, but of every adventurers'."

As I gave a l8ight explanation, I began taking off the equipment from the goblins. It's my usual job after every fight. Though it was Mururu who actually defeated these ones.

[……Could you not act like a bandit at least this time?]

"Also, you can sell of such equipment for money as well."

[Oi Renji? It's your first time fighting with this beastwoman. At least try acting like a Hero for once please?]

While ignoring Ermenhilde who kept saying such things, I took off the equipment from the goblins.

If only acting like a Hero would fill my wallet as well I wouldn't have minded it. But it doesn't and what's more important right now is money rather than the honour of a hero. You can't eat with just honour after all……If I said something like "I'm a Hero." Then I might get a meal in villages maybe but that in itself is ridiculous to do as a human.

Anyway, it's a pity that the only useable weapon here is a short sword. That too has a chip in its blade. I doubt we'll get much from selling this. I could only sigh.

"I see."(mururu)

"I don't think many adventurers do all that though……"(fran)

“When you don’t have money, this is a major source of income.”

[How deplorable…..]

Thereafter, we had Mururu search for Goblins and me and Miss Francesca also joined the fighting.

That said, it was difficult for us to keep up with Mururu’s speed. She’s fast and strong. It was easier to move seperately from her rather than matching along with her. Frankly speaking, the difference in physical ability is a bit too much.

It once again made me realize the difference between humans and Beastmen. Probably, not even Faylona would be able to keep up with her.

“We fought quite a lot but…….are you fine?”(fran)

“Yeah, I’m almost at my limit.”(renji)

2 long swords on my waist, 1 short sword on the other side of the waist. An iron shield on my left hand, and 2 battleaxes on my back. The total weight was probably a bit more than 40kgs. Rather than saying heavy, it was difficult to even move my body. My body is well trained from the constant travelling but this is still taking away most of my stamina. If I did not have the Cheat given to me, I probably wouldn’t have been able to even move.

My breathing has become rough but I can go on a bit more. I really want to return quickly. How the hell do fantasy protagonists walk around so easily with much more stuff in their bags? If I had wished the goddess that I wanted to become like the protagonist of a fantasy story, I wonder how I would have become?

While thinking of that, I distracted my mind from the strain.

[You're just too greedy.]

"This much should fill up our wallets pretty well."

"Rather than such things, my claws cut better. How is that even useful, that blunt thing?"

Mururu who said that was also holding a boorish club and a sword, that didn't suit her small body, in her hands as well.

It's lesser than what I have but still she doesn't even seem to feel a little weight from that. I felt like making her carry half of what I had but quickly threw away that thought. That would be low of me both as an adult and as a man.

"Earning money means you have to collect such things that can be sold."

"…….I really can't understand humans."

“I don’t think that’s exactly correct though.”(fran)

[You’re definitely wrong here, Renji.]

Oh shut up. We have to leave tomorrow so we have to earn as much as possible by today.

We have acquired provisions, and we should get horses as well. But there are many other things like herbs and medicines needed in a journey. There’s no such thing as having too much money.

Normally, I wouldn’t work this hard but since we have strict schedule I want to be ready for any unforeseen circumstances. Not to mention that 9i have been getting involved into too many troublesome things these days.

Thinking all that……I feel tired again. I wonder if I’ll be able to even move tomorrow.

After returning to the Magic City, I first went straight to the item shop to sell off the equipment gotten from goblins. When I put down all the equipment on his counter, the shopkeeper shouted in surprise. Well it can’t be helped, after all normally an adventurer doesn’t come up with so much equipment to sell after going to just one hunt.

Though it earns you money, it’s also bulky and difficult to carry back to the city. It also becomes a hindrance while fighting and if you drop it just to fight then collecting it all back is a pain on its own. And, most of the equipment can’t be used readily since monster don’t maintain their

weapons. That's why people prefer hunting more monsters instead of gathering items from every monster. Most adventurers find the former to be more efficient after all.

After that, I submitted the goblin fangs at the guild and took our reward. As expected, with three of us, we had hunted quite a lot of them so the sum was pretty good. The expenses for the travel were still bigger though.

"Oh right, Mururu, where have you been sleeping till now?"

"Outdoors."

I should have known. Miss Francesca was really surprised but I wasn't that much since I expected this answer.

She was broke and has no idea how money works. Not to mention beastmen are natural hunters that live in the wild. They really have no problem with sleeping outdoors.

"Here."

Saying that, I handed Mururu with some of the money we earned in a pouch.

I handed one to Miss Francesca as well. She refused at first but when I said that it was fine, she accepted it. Well, she helped us so its only normal though.

“This is?”(mururu)

“Reward from the request. This is the money you have earned after today’s work.”

She looked at the pouch with a curious gaze and checked its weight and whatnot.

It looked so amusing that even while knowing it was rude of me, I ended up laughing.

“So, you can eat things other than dried meat with this as well.”(renji)

“I see. Earning like this and then use it for food, is it?”(mururu)

“No, money is used not just for food but……”

If I start explaining about ‘shopping’ to her now, I’ll really get tired.

Hunting goblins, gathering equipment, selling it at the city……..honestly, I’m really tired already. I want to go back to my inn and just sleep.

Sitting on a wooden stool at the guild, I breathed a sigh. Aah, I’m really tired.

[You just find explaining a pain don’t you?]

“Let’s meet up with Faylona and decide when to meet tomorrow already. I’m soo tired.”

“…..Mouu.”(fran)

Saying that, Miss Francesca began explaining various uses of money to Mururu.

Well, whatever. Leaving that aside, I began thinking of other things. I wonder what Faylona is doing right now. He’s taking too much time to buy just horses. Did he also go on hunting alone maybe?

[Fuu, we sure worked a lot today.]

“You did absolutely nothing though?”

Taking Ermenhilde out of my pocket, I flicked it.

“Hmm.”

It was Heads.

“It’d be nice if something good happens.”

While looking at the counter, I muttered so. But I think it’d be difficult.

Probably, we won't be able to hire a magician. There are many better requests than the one I put up. A normal magician wouldn't accept mine.

That's why I decided not to think of such depressing things.

But next, I thought of our journey. We'll be moving with horses but frankly speaking, riding on horses is really painful. Even after I've gotten used to it, it's physically taxing to travel long distances on horses.

Basically, your butt, or rather, your whole lower body starts hurting. And if you push it, your whole body starts hurting as well.

Thinking about it, I ended up sighing again.

Beside me, the former newbie Miss Francesca was teaching the newbie adventurer Mururu about the uses of money. That scene looked so pleasant, it healed me.

"It's peaceful."

[You were fighting goblins only a few hours ago though.]

.....My partner really lacks dreams.

Interlude 4 The Sage's Part/Act

Looking over the documents handed to me this morning, an confirming that there were no problems with it, I signed them to begin my today's work. If there were any unclear points, I would call the person in charge and ask for an explanation. After the Demon God's subjugation had been completed, I, Utano Yuuko took a job in Imnesia continent that made me a superior to others. Even I myself think that it really doesn't suit me though.

Recently, I have been spending everyday like this. While rubbing my eyes, I breathed a sigh. When was the last time I left the castle town even?

No, when was the last time that I simply relaxed all day as well? Thinking that, I looked up to the ceiling wondering what the hell was I doing with my life.

Even though I am praised as a Sage, a Hero and whatnot, inside I'm still a normal human.

I get tired when I use my brains too much, and I get irritated if I don't get to move my body much. But now that the Demon God had been killed, what was necessary was not brawn but brains. And ability to guide the people.

Unfortunately, I was given the job to deal with domestic affairs, or rather, to give others various jobs. One year after the subjugation of the Demon God, I was appointed as the Municipal Head of this country—-the Imnesia Kingdom. Rather than saying that I had talent for this, this worlds

domestic and diplomatic policy levels were so much lower than modern society that my ideas seemed extremely novel and revolutionary to them.. Being continuously threatened by the Demon God, only their military and war related skills developed. There was no kind of activities made for pleasure or fun, and most of the land was in control of nobles and not put under the management of a farmer who could work on it.

Production and manufacturing is mainly related to weapons and armours. Other things like stylish clothing or ornaments were made only for the noble brag about them. Though the price of such articles was one of the reasons why they were not popular with commoners but above all, they simply did not have the time to waste on such things.

The threat of monsters was still there, even the demons were still alive. Though the people were given a temporary sense of freedom with the subjugation of the Demon God, it's not like their lives completely changed. There were too many people who had lost their families and place to work due top monster attacks.

Though I have knowledge, I don't have the experience to manage such jobs properly. Even if I want to open up a orphanage, I don't know what things are necessary. Thanks to all that, I am spending everyday where my head hurts constantly. I am clearly not suited for this. Shouldn't these guys pick a better experienced person for this? Well, at least they help me when I ask for advice in such matters.

Recently, I do feel that I've gotten a bit used to this job as well but still I have a long way to go.

There are a lot of things to do at the royal capital. Maintenance of the highways, repairs of the city walls *etc.* We still have to shift homeless to

permanent houses, distribute provisions to orphans and also collect reasonable taxes from the surrounding villages as well.

Right now there is one in the capital only but sooner or later I want to set up orphanages in the villages as well. Not just farmlands, I want to create mills and factories as well. There's a huge availability of land and personnel so I have to try that.

Today as well, I'll have to face off the huge amount of documents. Thinking that I felt like crying a bit.

"I should have also left on a journey like a certain someone……"

I muttered but there was no response to that.

The office I have been provided with is huge but I'm the only one here. My thoughts were too unique for the people of this world so there's no one who could converse with me.

No, I don't lack communication skills, the people of this world are simply that thickheaded. Thanks to that, not a single man tries to even flirt with me. They simply don't have a good discerning eye in my opinion though.

A few bookshelves and a work table. A sofa and table for visitors. In the simple kitchen, only a teapot with tea leaves had been prepared. Maids would keep the room clean but documents scattered around the table were a bit too much. It's not like I'm bad at keeping things tidy but when you have to deal with so many documents everyday, it becomes like this

normally. I'll say this again but I'm definitely not bad at keeping things tidy alright?.....I'm not good at it either though.

snap As I snapped my fingers, a book flew out from one of the bookshelves and floated down into my arms. It was the magic [Float]. My cheat is [to be able to use any magic from any manga, anime, novel or games]. It's super convenient but because it is so convenient I feel like I'm not getting enough physical exercise nowadays. Insufficient exercise is the arch enemy for a woman. Especially for your weight and body figure.

Thinking like that, I decided to change my thoughts so I opened the book. I'll lose if I let that get to me. I think I should start exercising a bit from tomorrow.

"Let's see....."

Even this country has things like Department of Finance and Department of Infrastructure so as long as I sign the document, I can leave the rest to the specific specialised department.

It's not like I could do everything alone anyway. I'm already at my limit in the first place, if I were made to lead all the departments alone, I'd probably break completely. Mentally.

"Hmm?"

When I was about to begin reading, I felt a disturbance in the magic of the room.

It was simply a matter of my senses, it's not like an incident occurred or anything. It's just that normally magicians of this world use magical energy existing inside their bodies but me and one other magician use the magical energy brought forth from the world itself.

This feeling was a signal that the other magician like me was affecting this room.

"Do you need something, Koutarou-kun?"

For a few seconds, nothing happened. But the disturbance in magical energy kept on growing.

I guess he's coming here using [teleport] but I wonder what happened. He is one of the 13 GodSlayers like me, Inoue Koutarou aka [Demonic Eye Holder] [The Wizard].

After some time, in the empty space, a human figure appeared and soon took full shape.

".....What's with that getup?"(yuuko)

"Fu—-with this, nobody would recognise me right?"(koutarou)

"You're just wearing a ragged robe all over your body."

"To think that you wouldn't understand the merits of this....."

I could only sigh in amazement.

While saying that, the one who appeared was man dressed in ragged clothes. Well, true in that kind of getup one wouldn't be able to tell whether he's a man or woman as long as he doesn't talk. In fact, Koutarou-kun does have a thin figure for a man so one might think of him as tall lady?.....maybe not.

He was covered in a ragged robe from head to toe and only his lip portion was visible. You'll make the room more dusty so really stop.

Or rather, how should I say this.....he looks so shabby. It's not like he is lacking money either.

I really can't understand this child's clothing sense. Even when we travelling, he'd pick clothes that showed his skin. That led to him getting insect bites, and getting cut from the branches of trees as well. I really hope he'd take more care of himself.

"So why are you in that ragged getup again? Trying to act like a suspicious person?(yuuko)

"What the heck.....Didn't I just say? In this getup, nobody would recognise who I was so its easier to move around!"

It's amazing he didn't get arrested like that. What are the royal guards doing? I thought about about reducing their salaries inside my head. Well, even if they did try to catch him, he'd just [Teleport] away anyway. Even like this he's still one of the Heroes after all. Even his physical

abilities are above those of other people in this world.

"So what did you come here for? Sorry but I'm really busy right now so I can't play along with you…..Are you here to help Yuuta-kun maybe?"(yuuko)

Kuuki Yuuta-kun was a knight of this country and also one of the 13 Heroes. He was the vice commander of the Knight Order famous as the [The Shield Knight]. It's been only one year since he entered the order but due to his achievement as one who had saved the world, he was promoted to the position of vice commander in half a year. He's working hard everyday even now it seems.

Also, in terms of ability he even surpasses the strongest knight of this country, O'brien, so he'd probably become the commander soon or later.

Right now he's acting as the aide to the commander and also learning the various jobs of the commander at the same time. It'll be weird if he was suddenly made the commander and asked to lead the whole knight order, so this is for the best. Yuuta-kun isn't hated by anyone in his surroundings so he seems to be spending everyday happily. I'm jealous. I also want to work my body a little.

"If you're here for money, they'll give you salary as well you know?"(yuuko)

"I'll pass. I'm not that free. And neither am I short on money."

Then why the hell are you in those worn out clothes? If you just wanted

to hide your identity, just dress in full black like assassins in games.

"If you're not here to pass time, quickly tell me why you came? I'm really busy you know."

Saying that, I swung the documents in front of Koutarou-kun. Lots of paperwork unrelated to any domestic affairs was waiting for me.

"……You really lack fun in your life. You should enjoy conversing like this more."

"Like I said, I'm not free. Do you just want someone to talk to?"

"No. I'm here to borrow your knowledge."

"Mine?"

Did some kind of trouble occur? When I looked at him questioningly, he removed his robe.

What appeared was silver hair and heterochromatic eyes, one gold and one red. It's a result of asking the goddess to change his appearance as soon as he came to this world. An androgynous face and physique, silver hair, a red right eye and a golden left eye. He really looked like someone from a fantasy world. Or rather, even in this world, he was the only one with this kind of appearance.

"My Demonic Eye showed Renji-dono's future, it seems he will face

danger……”(koutaoru)

“It’s not the first time Yamada-kun will get into danger.”

I cut off his words instantly.

Also, how should I say this but, Koutarou-kun’s [Demonic Eye of Future Sight] had a varied accuracy. No, I guess I should say that there is no one specific future. This is nothing but knowledge from my original world but the future was like the various branches of a tree. There was not one but infinte futures that could take place.

Especially, among us——[The Brave] Souichi-kun, the [Demonic Sword User] Hisaki Masaki-chan and Yamada-kun whose powers are a bit set apart from the norm, prediction of these people’s future is mostly incorrect.

Even if you say that Yamada-kun is in danger, I guess he must be getting involved into another troublesome case, that’s all I feel. In fact, he’s been like that from the very beginning. Even when someone predicts his life will be in danger, he would always come out alive. Even if the opponent was a high level Demon, or the Demon Lord, or the Demon God. He would struggle endlessly, get back up desperately, and do all he could to hide his fear.

But well…….

“So, what about Yamada-kun? Is it related to this request from the Spirit God you told me about a little back?”

"Umu. They'll probably leave the Magic City tomorrow but they'll face a Demon god's descandant during their travels."

"Again? He fought one with Souichi and others as well right? And he fought one at a rural village as well it seems."

Saying that, I picked the mithril sword kept near my table. The purple amethyst at the end of the handle was a proof that it was Yamada-kun's sword.

And Yamada-kun had sold this sword to a weapon shop in some village. Before the king or the knight order could find it, I bought it back with my pocket money. I'll charge him for that money, definitely. It seems he's poor, so I'll just make him work somewhere.

It'll be punishment for pushing such a troublesome job on me, leaving the kids alone and going around saving random people in the countryside. Saving even strangers is one his virtues but that doesn't mean he can neglect us. I'm not going to forgive him so easily.

When I started thinking like that, rather than my work load, my irritation towards Yamada-kun became bigger. In the first place, that man is too selfish. Even though he has a position like an elder brother, a father and a guardian to others.....he'd always get himself injured by rushing to the frontlines. It's good that he wants to protect the kids but how much does he want to make us worry for him? He's the model for a useless adult. But even then, it can't be helped that we all trust him and found that part of him to be very attractive. His hard working nature is really great.....I feel like I lost somehow so I should change my thoughts.

Even though he's the weakest, he doesn't accept that he's also the most unique among us.

Among us 13, he was the only one who made the correct choice, he uses that power not for himself but for others. As a result, he alone bears the grudge and hatred of all the Demons for the sin of killing the Demon God. Even though we are celebrated as GodSlayers and as heroes, the demons only hate Yamada-kun who killed the Demon God and not all of us 13.

How many women have cried for that man. That fact that I'm also one of them is really not funny. What kind of man makes a woman cry and then leaves her as well? That too for a whole year?

Soon he'll be coming to the Royal Capital for the Spirit God's request, or rather as escort for the Beastman who took that request. I hope you're ready Yamada Renji, I'll catch you and work you to your bones for this.

The martial arts tournament was also coming close. That will be the first place to start.

While I was deciding all that, Koutarou-kun taken a few steps backwards.

"What is it?"(yuuko)

"No, nothing at all ma'am."

Why so formal suddenly? This kid's speaking patterns change like that suddenly, its really amusing.

Putting the Mithril sword back on the table, I breathed a sigh.

"So, what was that about Yamada-kun?"

"Ahem……..While heading to the capital, he'll be attacked by a descendant of Demon God."

"Oh right, that."

I'm not really worried about Yamada-kun being in danger.

"If its Yamada-kun he'll probably make it through but are you really that worried?"(yuuko)

"My right eye, well, it predicted his death."

"……..I see."

Death. That isn't gentle at all.

But I can't move away from here either. There are things only I can do here. And I'm not going to be the one to go and meet him even though he was the one who neglected me for so long. Though the latter part is the main reason, but the former is important as well.

“Just leave him alone.”(yuuko)

“How heartless. As expected of the great Witch.”

“I’ll slap you.”

“I’m very sorry.”

When I said that with a smile, he apologised instantly. Good, I like honest children.

Seeing Koutarou-kun and his unstable character, I felt relaxed. Who’s a witch? I even think that I’m more suited to be called the Saint than Yayoi-chan……No, that’ll be painful in its own way.

“Well if its Yamada-kun, he should be fine right?”(yuuko)

“…….Really?”

“How many times has it been that your right eye has foreseen Yamada-kun’s death?”

When I asked that, his gaze turned blank and he started counting on his fingers.

First he went through all five fingers in his right hand then all five of his

left as well……

“I have no idea how many times it has been.”(kou)

“Exactly.”

He was more unique than Souichi-kun, who is the [Brave] and the [swordswoman] Masaki-chan who wished to have the power to even cut through fate itself, there was no such thing as a definite future.

The power to not lose against anyone. The power to cut through fate itself. Both were incredibly powerful abilities. Depending on how its used, they could rival even the Demon lord in pure strength. But the power of will may allow you to cross your own limits but you cannot cross the limits of a human, or so I think. Compared to that, what Yamada-kun wished for was for a weapon to kill Gods. The power to kill Gods. It was Aya-chan who asked for power rivalling that of Gods that stand above all life, but it was only in terms of magical energy. It was only Yamada-kun who asked the power to surpass even Gods. Its meaning, its result, we saw it one year ago. That’s why we/I can trust him.

“He’ll reach the capital safe and sound. Definitely.”

“That’d be great but.”

“Just trust him. He’s our leader after all.”

The person himself would definitely deny that though, he didn’t wish for that either.

……but the man called Yamada Renji was definitely our leader. That won't change even now. Even after he disappeared, he will always be our leader……for he is the strongest among us all.

It's not like he had some kind of charisma, it's not like he always made the right decisions. We failed together so many times. We the wrong choice so many times. But even then the only reason we didn't break was because he stood in front of us, for he would lead the children with him always. With Ermenhilde in his hands, even though he could fight at full strength only against the Demon God, still he would stand in front of us.

And all the Heroes would chase after his back. He gave us a sense of relief. Maybe that was what he wished for as well. Maybe that was the ideal he had in his mind as well. As an adult, as the oldest, a life which he could be proud of. He always said that.

"He's the Hero Protagonist of the story. He won't die."

"I'm jealous of Yuuko-dono who has so much faith in him. It'd be nice if I could also be like him as well."

Everyone says that. I guess all men wish to become the center of their party, eh?

From Yamada-kun's perspective that position seems to be the hardest, most painful and heavy though. I could only smile wryly at that.

"Then work harder. 'Hero' is a verb. Not a title——if you want to become

the protagonist, you can only continue to act like a hero."(yuuko)

"Umu."

"Also——Astrarea is always watching over Yamada-kun, he'll be fine."

"…….Yeah, that's right."

I recalled that overprotective, ill-natured Goddess.

I don't know which heartstrings of hers were pulled but that Goddess has affection for Yamada-kun. A goddess who loves a God slayer.

"But still, my eye shows Renji-dono's death.."

When he said till that, I snapped my fingers.

The next moment, Koutarou-kun disappeared from my sights. Activating [Teleport] magic, I made him fly away. His destination was the centre of the Spirit forest in Elfreim continent. By the side of the World Tree. There might be a be few miscalculations but he won't be far away from there. Probably.

Yamada-kun's death he says, death. If you're that worried, lend him a hand even if its just from the sidelines. With koutarou-kun's abilities, he should be able to lend a hand without making others realize his presence. And also to return from the Elfreim continent.

“Seriously. I’m really busy you know.”

Opening the book in my hand, I turned the page.

Construction of the orphanage, providing jobs to vagrants, restoration of the capital, monster subjugation, diplomacy with Elfreim——--and many other things are left for me to do.

I don’t need a over talkative Wizard with me but it’d be great if I can get some actual help.

Hurry up and come to the Capital Yamada-kun. I’m waiting for you with lots of work.

Chapter 26 Road to the Capital (3)

(T/N: I just realized I had been translating the chapter titles for the past 2 as ‘Road to the kingdom’ for some reason when it was ‘road to the capital’. Why? I don’t fcking know! Probably because there’s a WN with a similar name and I got that mixed up. I swear I’m always in some kind of a daze when I’m translating this stuff. :P)

[Nejispira : Road to kingdom is a R18 Novel! Beware.]

While attaching our luggage to the Horses’ saddle, I yawned when my eyes met Miss Francesca’s. Feeling embarrassed, I tried to hide it by concentrating on arranging our luggage.

Early mornings during the fall season were chilly and the sky was still dim and gloomy.

“Renji-san, do you need help somewhere?”

While I was preparing near the city gate, the girl behind me asked me that.

“No, I’m fine. Or rather, me and Feirona are enough for the preparations so you can rest some more, you know?” (T/N: Faylona = Feirona now as per the official english in the illustrations.)

“No……I’m fine. Even I have gotten somewhat used to travelling now.”

“Well, I know that.”

While answering her, I wondered why did it end up like this for nth time. Even though I actually know the reason as well.

I looked at the girl behind me who was crouching and packing things in a bag right now; Fuyou Aya. One of the 13 Heroes, the genius known as the [Grand Magus].

……Why did she accept such a request which has basically zero reward?

Well, I can somehow guess the reason but I'm not really sure. That's why I end up hesitating to ask her directly as well. Because I know Aya herself would be troubled on how to answer that if I asked her something like that. What does the girl Fuyou Aya expect from the man called Yamada Renji? Neither I nor Aya herself have yet to settle on an answer to that.

It's weird that we're still travelling together even though its like that. I did try to persuade her otherwise as well. There would be no reward, she'd miss her classes as well and there's even the job of transporting that Demon to the capital 1 week later. I don't think she'd have the time to stick with us, but…

"Still, you're ready to come with us?"(renji)

"Yes."

It was an instant answer. I could only sigh. It'd be useless to say anything more so I gave up. I already tried enough. She won't listen to

me even if I asked her not to now anyway. Not to mention, I'd make her mood worse as well. If that happened, worse case, I'd end up in a hole in the middle of the city.....I believe she wouldn't do that to me but since there have been past cases of multiple men who have suffered that so I can't be certain.

I felt like Ermenhilde was laughing inside my pocket. Must be my imagination.

"After all, you took a request with Souichi and Yayoi but.....It's not fair. (aya)

"Even if you tell me that.."

They were there so it had ended up like that. It's not like I was biased in any way, and if the chance had appeared I would have done a quest with Aya as well. Well, it's true that I didn't invite her though. Her pouting appearance looked really cute but if I knew things would end up like this, I would have invited her back then.

Well, even in that case, she would have probably joined us with a different excuse. It's a fact though that her coming with us will be a really great help to be honest. Leaving mine and Aya's circumstances aside, her ability is the real thing. Much greater than me or Miss Francesca. You could say that she was in a different level.

[At times like these, you should just be honest you know?]

"The fact that I can't is one of the pains that come with being an adult."

“What the heck does that even mean?”(aya)

Saying that, Aya giggled.

Seeing her like that, I could only sigh while drooping my shoulders.

“I don’t want you to do dangerous stuff and as a student I want you to be studying at school, is what I mean.”

“It’s fine. I’m actually pretty smart you know?”

Lifting her bag on her shoulders, she looked at me with a serene smile. Trust—I can feel her trust in me from her gaze. I’ve seen that gaze countless times during our journey. That’s why I can’t reject it now either. But I still questioned whether I actually had enough strength to be called worthy of receiving that smile. I, can only work hard and try my best to answer her smile, her trust. But the gap between our powers wouldn’t disappear.

“My studies will also be fine. Also……if I get into trouble, help me again alright?”(aya)

But Aya still said something like that to me with a smile. Those words were definitely said because she remembers the promise I once made to her long back.

Rustling my hair, I averted my gaze. That was embarrassing. In fact, I

want you to help me…….But I can't say that since I'm the guy and the adult here. I can't ask a girl younger than me to protect me after all.

"……."

"……..um, your reply?"(aya)

Now then, how should I answer that? Thinking, I looked towards Miss Francesca who was glancing towards us. Feirona and Mururu didn't care about us and were busy doing their packing. I'm thankful for that. Miss Francesca must be wondering why a hero like Aya chose to accept such a request I guess. Well, the reason's nothing more than the fact that I and Aya know each other.

The meeting place I had put in the request was the city's east gate but when I got there, I really was surprised since Aya was there waiting for us. Apparently, even Souichi was perfectly okay with Aya coming with us. Well, that guy is Aya's ally before anything…….though there's also the part where he really can't go against Aya as well. Please try to be a bit more stronger, Souichi.

Well, certainly this is a great help for us but how am I supposed to explain why a Hero was taking part in this quest to others? I wonder how much would it normally cost to hire a Hero to do your request?

I wasn't even expecting anyone. Worst case we three, Feirona, me and Mururu, alone would be journeying alone or so I thought. It was already a great surprise when Miss Francesca decided to accept that request. Though that itself was pretty weird. Why would she even accept such a dangerous request?

According to the person herself, she just wants to have an adventure. But the details were even more interesting.

Soon, Miss Francesca would graduate from school. As a noble daughter, she'd have very less freedom after that. After all, nobles have various duties of their own. After she graduates she won't get any chance to go on something like an adventure. I doubt her family would even allow something like that.

I have quite a few nobles in my list of acquaintances as well. I remember that they didn't have much freedom either. Thinking that way, Miss Francesca has actually received quite a lot freedom. I guess there'd be quite a lot of nobles who wouldn't see that as good but that's her problem to deal with. I can't help with that.

This journey would be dangerous, it could even be fatal for her. While understanding that, she still wants to come with us so I can't really refuse her. It's better to have as much firepower as possible after all.

"I'm done with the preparations. What about you?"

"Yeah, I'm done as well."

I called Feirona and it seems they're done with prep as well and were walking towards us. Aya's gaze felt like it became stronger towards me but I didn't pay it any heed. Unfortunately, I've decided to stop saying extremely embarrassing phrases from now on. In the first place, only heroes have the right to say those kinds of lines. They're too heavy for me.

We had bought 3 horses. Feirona on one horse, Mururu and Miss Francesca on one and me and Aya on the last. I would have preferred to have Miss Francesca behind me but if I had said that, let alone falling in a hole, I feel like I would've been burnt to death.

Thinking such stuff, I turned towards Mururu. She's making a somewhat sleepy face probably because she's not a morning person. Even though we're leaving on a difficult journey, I felt calming down a bit seeing her face.

"Wake up, Mururu. It's to depart."

"Un—-I'm fine."

You definitely don't look fine at all though. Miss Francesca shook her by her shoulders to wake her up but that only made her head to sway front and back. Her ponytail also swayed along with it making it look amusing.

When I looked towards Feirona, he shrugged his shoulders as if troubled. I'm not really minding it since I only feel calmer due to her.

"Leaving the sleepy girl aside, I look forward to working with you, Aya-dono."(elf)

"Yes, same here."

Like that, Feirona and Aya did a formal introduction to each other. But

even though it didn't feel very stiff probably because of their personalities.

While I was thinking that, I felt something pull my mantle. On looking, it was Mururu.

"What is it?"(renji)

"Who?"

She asked that while pointing towards Aya.....So she really doesn't know. I am one thing but it was surprising that she didn't recognise even Aya. At that Miss Francesca panicked and hurriedly explained her about Aya. Well, it's not like Aya'd get angry just because Mururu didn't recognise her you know? She's not that narrow minded. In fact Aya would find it better to be honest.

It's really tiresome to be treated as a Hero constantly. Mentally, that is. I think Aya is of the same opinion since she looked at Mururu and Francesca with a troubled expression.

".....a Hero chosen by the Goddess."

I don't know how Miss Francesca explained her but that was how Mururu described Aya now.

"Nice to meet you, um....."(aya)

“Mururu.”

“I see. Nice to meet you, Mururu.”

“Likewise.”

While smiling wryly, Aya greeted Mururu. Mururu didn’t seem to be on guard against Aya either and greeted her back as well.

“So we’re done with the pleasantries?”(renji)

“Yeah. Let’s depart quickly.”(elf)

“un.”(mururu)

Mururu nodded at Feirona’s words and we split in our respective groups.

Originally, Mururu was supposed to be with me and Aya with Miss Francesca but Aya changed that. The reason…….as an adult I shouldn’t pry too deeply into that. But I should say that even I wouldn’t get feelings for a child like Mururu in any case.

The horses in this world were more robust and strong-built ones like in armies ratehr than the racehorses we see normally. They were strong enough to carry two grown humans along with luggage and still have enough stamina to run. But in exchange, they weren’t that fast though still much faster than walking. Sitting on the saddle made for two first, I

extended my hand towards Aya.

Taking my hand, and using that as a fulcrum, she skilfully sat on the saddle. When someone has good looks, they sure look beautiful even while doing the most mundane of actions.

On glancing towards miss Francesca and Mururu, they had also climbed on their horse. Miss Francesca was in her usual travel clothes along with her leather breastplate and Mururu was wrapped in her white cloak. But since she was on a horse, her volptuous thighs were visible to the eye from under the cloak.

While I was looking at that, Aya suddenly pinched me from behind. It actually hurt a bit.

"I leave the horse riding to you."(aya)

"Hm, yeah."

Giving a short reply, I made the horse start running. If I were to give some excuse, I'd only be dragged deeper into the swamp after all. I know that from my own life experience. A good man doesn't make the mistake twice. Probably.

The guard on the gate was surprised by my and Aya's appearance but I decided to ignore him. After I'm done with this request, I should probably retire to some rural village once again. I don't want to stand out like this any longer after all.

[What were you doing?]

“Nothing weird, really.”

When I said that, I heard a sigh from inside my pocket. I really am not trusted at all.

“Souichi looks at Francesca-senpai’s chest a lot as well……..are all men like that?”(aya)

“……”

That’s really difficult to answer. Not to mention, that the person herself seems to have heard the question since I felt that her horse slightly moved away a bit from us. Must be my imagination.

But really there is no way to answer this question. At least not for a 28yr old man to a 18yr old girl. Somehow I could only apologise to Souichi in my head. It seems Miss Francesca’s affection points for him instantly dropped even though he wasn’t even here.

As the horse swayed while running, Aya hugged me tightly from behind so as to not fall off. Right now she wasn’t in her uniform but was in a light, scarlet robe with silver embroidery which could make one feel the sensation of her skin almost directly. Though her height has grown, she hasn’t really grown. Obviously, I can’t say that out loud. Well, I was also wearing a robe over my tunic so what I felt wasn’t really that much.

These clothes of her were made out of holy silver thread taken from a

special bug/crawler then had the protection of the Fire spirit Salamander applied on it turning it into a scarlet colour. Above that, the embroidery was made out of mithril as well. The robe she wore above it was also made out of the skin of a water dragon. On her waist was a mithril short sword with an emerald embedded at the end of the handle; and a magicians short rod with an almost transparent amethyst like gem embedded on top.

It's the same equipment as when she had fought against the Demon God. All of it were so valuable that they were essentially priceless. It could make one think that she was leaving to maybe start a war all on her own. Well, when you're on a journey, actually it might be better to be well equipped like her. You don't know what could happen after all so its better to be at top equipment always. I, who buys no new equipment due to lack of money is actually the one who does it wrong.

"But still, when we're on horses like this, you end up thinking back of times when we travelled together right?"(renji)

"…….haah."(aya)

She gave a sigh seeing that I had dodged her question but she didn't pursue any further. Thank god for that.

"That's true. After Yui-chan contracted with that Dragon, we started to always use that dragon to travel."(aya)

Hiyuu Yui. One of the heroes known as the Monster User/Tamer. She was the youngest among us 13. I wonder how she's doing these days. All of the monsters she contracted were famous ones. A Fairy who was a master

in spirit magic. A Ghost Knight that was immortal and a master swordsman. And an ancient dragon that called itself a king. I think they should be at the Elfreim continent right now. That place might be better to live in right now.

"Do you know what Yui's doing nowadays——?"(renji)

"I wonder. Maybe Yuuko-san knows about it."

Utano-san eh. I wonder what that person is doing right now as well. But considering it's her, she must have taken a lot of workload on herself and working hard right now, I guess. That's the kind of person she is. She can be scary at times too though.

"Renji, let's head straight towards the Forest of Rotting Souls."(elf)

"Sure! We'll go till the entrance and spend the night there. "

Making the horse run by our side, Feirona told us about our current destination. Forest of Rotting Souls. As it name suggests, it's a place where the dead walk and ghosts appear and the living rarely enter. The highway to the capital is made going around this forest but if we break through it directly, we'll be able to reduce a lot of time. Last night, me and Feirona decided to break through it while planning our routes to take.

Zombies are pretty tough but they have dull movement. Ghosts are harmless as long as you have a strong spirit/will. If we wanted to kill them we'd need silver-made equipment but if it was just to pass through,

it was pretty easy.

Well, originally only me, Feirona and Mururu were going to be travelling but now that we have Aya and Miss Francesca with us as well, we could kill them with magic too. Zombie's could be killed with physical weapons but ghosts were completely spirit types. Either magic or silver was compulsory. At first we could only ignore them and rush through the forest but now we would be pretty safe while going through it.

The only problem left is to make sure that we don't get lost. But with Feirona, the elf, with us, we should be fine with that as well.

[Journeying with Aya. How nostalgic.]

"Yes, that's true. I'll be in your care as well, Eru."(aya)

[Yeah, I leave Renji to you Aya.]

"…….why me?"

I could only sigh. It's true though so I couldn't really refute it either.

It's been one year since I travelled with Aya, with one of my comrades.

While running through the early morning, misty highway, I felt myself getting a bit excited. Aya must be the same as well. Thinking that, I became a bit happier.

Chapter 27 Road to the capital (4)

The view from the back of the horse felt nostalgic and it cheered me up. I felt it was unbecoming of my age.

Riding horses required stamina of a different kind than walking. What I want to say is, my whole body hurts.

"…….. I'm tired."

[Again you're talking like that.]

I had heard Ermenhilde's fed up voice countless times already.

But I really am tired. Even though a year ago I used to work hard, fight during the day and be on guard duty during the night. I wonder is it the one-year blank or have I just got too old for this.

While thinking about that I threw wood into the fire in front of me.

"Shouldn't you sleep for a while?"

"Yeah. Switch with me later."

Feirona asked me that worriedly, but the order for night duty had already been decided. Well, I'll switch with him after a few hours I just work hard till then.

They must have been tired from the journey because Ms Francesca and Mururu at already gone to sleep on the soft grass. Since we did not prepare anything comfortable like a tent, they were sleeping with just a blanket covering the whole body.

Only me and Feirona and Aya one awake right now. We had surrounding the bonfire but there was barely any conversation. In the darkness of the night only the sound of the fire crackling could be heard.

“Then, I’ll go to sleep first.”

“Please do. I’ll wake you up when it’s time.”

“……Then, take your time.”

“—wha”

what the hell does he mean by that. Giving a scornful laugh I broke another piece of wood for the fire.

Giving me a suggestive look by, he also went to sleep. Only me and Aya remained. Also Ermenhilde.

“Is it fine not to go to sleep?”

“um……. Yes.”

I see. I threw more wood into the fire.

I did not say it out loud but I once again felt nostalgic.

During the journey to kill the Demon God we often spent time like this. I wonder how long has it been……

At first she was cautious of me and barely talked. After that incident with the Ogre, she began talking. I recall the reason but cannot remember exactly how long ago it was. Probably, Aya remembers though. Realising that I felt a bit apologetic.

“It feels nostalgic right?”

After a long silence, she spoke up.

“Yeah, that’s right. Back then we used to spend lot of time like this.”

“…… Yes.”

When I said she replied in a happy manner. Was she happy that I remembered it was it simply because she could start a conversation. It was probably the former.

Her face shining from the fire looked more mature than those times.

“Say, Aya.”

“What is it?”

“How is your life in the Academy? Is it fun?”

When I asked that she looked at me and started laughing. She was trying to restrain herself apparently it was too funny.

Did I ask something weird? I tilted my head in confusion.

“Renji-san asks questions like an actual father would.”

“…….. Really?”

That was not really my intention. I could only scratch my head. That must have been funny as well because she started laughing again.

[Why not ask something more romantic instead?]

“Like what?”

What kind of question is that?

Thinking that——-

“Say, Aya.”

“fufu, what is it this time?”

“Hm…..”

I tried to think of a topic but nothing came to my mind. Questions regarding romance came to mind but if asked her “do you have a boyfriend?” I know exactly what would happen to me……..

Yayoi-chan probably would not have gotten a boyfriend and Souichi had not gotten a girlfriend when I asked him the last time. That guy is awkward and sucks it lying so it’s probably true.

Somehow I feel that the difficulty of asking questions suddenly increased due to what Ermenhilde said to me.

“Mouu”

As I spent time just looking at her, Aya sighed somewhat fed up yet somewhat enjoying this. To be unable to even hold a proper conversation, I really am an useless adult.

As I dropped my shoulders, Aya threw more wood into the fire while showing a gentle smile.

While looking at her smile, I once again felt that she had become more mature. Back then she had a childish side to her and a cute one as well.

Though sometimes she would surprise me by suddenly acting like an adult as well.

But her current smile held a womanly charm that could captivate anyone. Feeling a bit weird, I averted my gaze from her to the fire. What am I thinking of a child 10 years younger than me? I sighed again. I, myself, feel more childish than her. It was both pathetic and embarrassing.

"The Magic Academy, it's fun. I made a lot of friends and could also read lots of magic documents as well."

[Friends? If it's Aya, you must have a lot of many friends as well?]

Don't ask that. As usual, I could only hope that my partner would learn to read the mood.

I don't know how she took that question, but she was now looking shyly towards the fire. She really has grown a lot this past one year. I had never seen smile like this before.

For the time being, let's just hit Ermenhilde inside my pocket and hope it tries to read the mood more.

"Well, as long as you're having fun, it's fine. It's important for classmates to have fun with each other."

Once again I averted the topic. Though it must be like Ermenhilde had said. I am also a man after all, whether it be my comrade or someone

younger than me, I end up seeing them in that way anyway. Right now, we were talking like it's normal but we had not been summoned, we would never had even made contact.

And now she even had the title of a hero. It's normal to have the attention of guys.

"…….. Is that it?"

Apparently she was not happy with my words because she was now pouting and I also felt that her gaze had become sharper as well. Pretending to have not noticed that I threw more wood into the fire.

[Seriously.]

"I just want Aya to simply enjoy a normal life as a student."

Probably, Utano-san had the same reason to send these kids to the magic Academy. They were 15 years old. Normally one would spent time playing with their friends at this age.

"Renji-san always runs away like that."

"I'm an adult after all."

"It's not fair."

“Adults are never fair, Aya.”

When I shrugged my shoulders saying that, I only got a sigh in response. Ermenhilde was the same.

If I had to answer honestly, I’ll have to take a step forward. I’ll have no choice but to clearly understand what she expects from me.

And I don’t think even she wants that. As a result, even though she would show discontentment when I ‘run away’ like this, she never gets truly angry. I think she enjoys my playing with words.

We were silent for a while after that. Once again, only the sound of the crackling fire, the swaying of grass doing and sleeping sounds of Ms Francesca came to our ears.

“It really is nostalgic, right?”

“It truly is.”

I feel we’ve had this same kind of conversation a long time before.

I would be unfair and she would be direct and honest.

What is it that she expects from me I wonder.

During the journey, both Utano-san and Toudo would often scold me.

But even so, we have yet to find the answer. And even if we did I wonder if I could see that out loud.

[You 2 seriously……. Don't make any progress at all.]

"You just keep your mouth shut."

This bastard, I really will throw away.

"Eru has also changed."

[Hmm?]

"You have become more human-like."

[…… I am a weapon though.]

I silently laughed at Aya's words. When I did, I could feel Ermenhilde's atmosphere become disappointed.

It can't be helped, after all, I see you as my partner and not just a weapon. That's why I felt happy when Aya said that. And it's amusing to see you get disappointed at that in such a human like way.

"So she says."

[Why do both of you don't treat me like a weapon…….. No, all of you 13

summoned ones are like that.]

It even started grumbling like that.

That was even more amusing as me and Aya started laughing again. It's your fault for saying something so strange.

"You really should go to sleep now."

"I will go to sleep when it's your turn to sleep as well."

There's deep meaning behind what she said, but depending on how you look at it, one could really take it the wrong way.

"I hope you don't say that to someone else as well?"

"I don't. Only to you, Renji-san."

She started giggling. I thought of answering in an amusing way but gave up in the end simply scratched my head.

I wonder serious or just messing with me. Must be the latter. Cause that would be better for my heart.

"I see."

"Yes."

I could reply like that only and she as well replied with just one word.

I think that's fine to be honest.

While we gazed at the bonfire in front of us, I gave a sigh. Even after one year we haven't changed. I wonder if that's good or bad. If I were to use Ermenhilde's words, there is no progress.

When I was thinking like that, Aya silently stood up. And came and sat beside me just like that.

"You did this when we were travelling as well back then a lot."

"…..Mouu."

But I feel that the distance between us is shorter than what it was back then. Would this be called as progress I wonder.

[fumu.]

Also, it's troublesome that I don't have anyone to entrust Ermenhilde with like I had back then.

Normally I would leave it with Souichi or Utano-san. I should think about maybe giving it to Ms Francesca or Feirona the next time we camp. Well, it's not like this party would continue for ever. I would probably not travel with Aya after this.

In the end after that we barely talked any more. The fact that I had stayed on night duty more than required and forgot to wake up Feirona till much later, I'll just consider this that we were serious in our duty. I guess I must have been affected too much by my nostalgia.

The fact that the we have made no progress, means that our relationship has not changed in any year. That in turn means that my position inside Aya's heart has not changed even though I had disappeared so selfishly. I should be happy for that——- right?

After switching with Feirona, I positioned myself so. Giving a wry smile, I closed my eyes.

"Goodnight, Ermenhilde."

[Yes. Sleep well, Renji.]

Tomorrow, we will be going through a forest filled with ghosts and undead. I won't have the time to think of such useless things.

I hated that part of myself that ran away from my own thoughts.

Adults really are dirty. They only run away all the time.

Chapter 28 Forest of Rotting Souls (1)

As the horses galloped, we ran through the forest.

As the name of the forest would suggest, the earth and every tree was rotting and the undead and spirits would appear in this forest.

Just running through the rotten land would consume stamina and the miasma released by the rotting trees tried to decrease our sanity. Zombies would aim for living beings like us and try to make us also like them. Ghosts that had mist like bodies would decrease our mental resistance, and show us nightmares when we sleep. Countless corpses can be seen while crossing through this forest and the dark miasma released by the trees would not allow sunlight to enter the forest.

I feel that we should exit this forest as soon as possible but this forest was extremely dense. Even if we use horses to run through the shortest distance, it would still take at least five days.

“Feirona, can you keep on going a bit more?”

“Yeah, no problem. But before that——”

“I’ll take care of Ms Francesca and Mururu. You just focus on breaking through this forest.”

“Got it.”

I confirmed his condition by going a bit closer to him on my horse.

The one most affected by crossing this forest is Feirona. Without any protection of the spirits, the effect of the hatred from the dead and spirits on this elf was more than what I expected. Even he himself, who lived in the forest of magical energy, did not expect it to be so. He seems to be trying to hide it but the colour of his face seems really bad. He is it sick yet but one could tell from a single glance that his condition was growing worse.

Even though I was supposed to know how troublesome evil spirits can be, I still didn't expect the effect to be this big. And it's not like this is the first time I'm travelling within an elf either. But the last time I did so it was through a forest that had immense protection from the spirits I think. I see, I think I once again understood why elves are called as the watchmen of the forests. His condition is not that bad yet but that doesn't mean it can't get worse. I must do something. I thought about it as I ran on my horse. The best thing to do at such times would be to take a rest but even that was difficult in this forest.

There was no paved roads in this forest. Even now, we are moving forward with the help of Feirona's foreseeing abilities as one of the inhabitants of forests. And it would be really bad if he became unable to move.

"It would be nice if we could at least sleep well during the night."

[That would be even more difficult in this forest though.]

I guess so. While the sun was up we would move towards the east

where the capital is but at night we will get attacked by zombies and ghosts.

It's amazing that we can still move even after having not rested for three whole days. Since we let the females get sleep in priority, my and Feirona's fatigue had reached its peak.

I only have to fight with my sword so it's fine as long as I last while we move but our movement was dependent on Feirona's experience so at least I wanted him to get some rest.

"If only you could become a silver sword we would have less problems to deal with."

[Even I would be more relaxed if I could but unfortunately I am neither silver nor Mithril.]

Well, I wasn't expecting much anyway. Saying that inside my mind, I lined up alongside Ms Francesca's horse while running.

That Jade Green coloured sword was made of material that could not be found anywhere on this world. To be honest Ermenhilde was a sword made out of only magical energy. It even had the weird property to increase its sharpness, attack power and intensity only by releasing the seven constraints put upon me by the goddess. Just like silver is effective against the undead spirits, Ermenhilde's blade was one of the rare weapons that can wound a God.

Certainly, that was a very rare effect but it was useless in this current

situation. It could work as a normal weapon against zombies but would have no effect on spirits and ghosts. As usual, I felt like crying from the uselessness of my cheat.

"Ms Francesca."

"What is it, Renji-sama?"

An energetic voice came to me as reply.

Because we let them rest at night, Ms Francesca and Mururu were still energetic. Currently Aya was resting behind me by closing her eyes. She is not asleep, but I still felt slightly embarrassed by seeing how much trust she put on me. Thinking that for a second, I realised that I was being imprudent and removed those thoughts by shaking my head.

"Mururu as well, tell me if you feel like you can't go on any longer. We will take a rest then."

"fufu, thanks for your consideration. But I'm still fine."

Saying that she gave up a soft smile which made me feel calm as well. But that was also only for a second. Her gaze suddenly became serious. It's same time Feirona running at the front also stopped his horse, and Aya was resting while leaning on back also stirred and prepared for battle.

When I finally looked towards the front, I saw armoured human zombies standing as if blocking our path. Well that probably is not their intention

but they still were in the way. Looking closely I also saw 2 mist like things floating around them; must be ghosts.

They say you cannot see spirits but through their evil intentions and hatred the ghosts in this world held mist like bodies. Well, it made things easier for us though. The first time I saw them, rather than getting scared, I just felt 'this really is a fantasy world eh?', that's all.

Zombies didn't have clear thoughts or will. They didn't swarm like goblins and simply attacked the living due to pure instinct.

In contrast, ghosts would control zombies or other undead that had weak wills to attack the living. There were even more troublesome enemies like vampires and Grim Reapers that had the same abilities as well.

If there was a clergy with us we could purify them with the goddess's miracle but a clergy that could use such a high level miracle would not go on an adventure in the first place. He/She would remain in the church while praying to the goddess. I may be prejudiced on that though.

"Aya, I leave the ghosts to you. Ms Francesca go to Feirona's side."

Saying that I climbed down from my horse and at the same time Mururu came beside me. Normally we would ignore such enemies but seeing that Feirona stopped, that must be the path we have to go on. Concluding that, I decided to quickly take care of this.

"I'll take the right."

“Then, the left is mine.”

At the same time I kicked the earth and ran. Her cloak flapped open and Mururu’s both hands grew out knife-like claws and were wrapped in white fur. As she ran towards the zombies with physical speed incomparable to mine, she mowed down their rotting flesh with those claws. Unable to withstand the shock, zombies fell to the ground with their limbs blown off. Then she proceeded to kick away their heads as if it was daily work.

Zombies were really weird. They fall into confusion if their heads get blown off. But no matter how many times you pierce their heads with arrows, they were unaffected. Normally, one would focus on blowing away their heads till nothing remained of it. A theory suggests that something—— like an evil spirit or bug has attached itself to the corpse and is controlling it but I’m not interested in checking that. Sounds disgusting. As long as I know how to kill it I don’t care.

I also came close side-by-side to her and attacked the zombie’s neck with my iron knife. The first swing cut through halfway and then completely severed it from the reverse slash. It would have been impossible if it was a living being but since their flesh as rotten and muscles have decayed, this much was enough.

[Or you could use me you know?]

“You want to cut through rotting flesh?”

[..... I am a weapon after all.]

You just hesitated, did you not?

Giving a wry smile, I face the remaining one. At that instant the two ghosts also burst up. Aya must have used her magic.

Inside the silent forest, and explosives sound resounded. Three times.

For some reason ghosts were weak to magic. Magical energy—-were they weak to magic as it was turning your mental will to offensive ability or was it due to some other reason? And it was not like anything would work. Only Fire and lightning type magic were effective.

It was pretty common in fantasy games but when you see that occurring in reality as well, you will become curious behind the reason.

Even while I thought of such things, I didn't stop my hands and severed the head of the final zombie. Since they have rotten flesh, it has very dull movements. Apparently, humans unconsciously restrain their own power to not destroy their own bodies but zombies don't have that either. But if their flesh has rotten to this extent, even that is useless. Their arms would fall of just if they try to grab me and their legs would get torn off just by running a bit.

Mururu was already heading towards Miss Francesca. As expected, she didn't want to cut through rotting flesh with her prided claws it seems. I wonder what did it feel to cut with your own claws. When I asked, she said only word–Disgusting. Well, if she says that it means she still isn't used to using claws on living things.

After confirming that all of them were dead, I returned to my horse on which Aya was already sitting.

"That helped."

"You're welcome."

Taking her small hand, I once again climbed the horse.

Due to the loud explosion just now, the forest's silence felt even more eerie now.

"Then, let's hurry up and move further."

As if he was waiting for me, Feirona began to move with his horse again. I and Miss Francesca moved our horses to follow him as well.

By my expectations, we'll still take 2 more days. There's still a long way to go before we leave this forest. Thinking that, I naturally leaked a sigh.

"Are you alright?"

Aya asked me from behind as she put a bit more strength in her arms around my waist. It's nice to be this close to a girl but if I am allowed to say something unromantic, this makes riding the horse more difficult so please spare me from this.

She seemed to be saying something but it was drowned by the sound of horses running and the blowing wind. When I was about to ask her again, Feirona came near us on his horse.

“Did something happen?”(renji)

“There’s something there——”

Saying that, he stopped his horse and climbed down.

Then, he kneeled to the ground and traced through the earth with his finger. On looking closely, I realized that it was actually footsteps. It’s amazing how he had noticed that.

Even I have learned how to walk through a forest somehow but I guess I’m still incomparable to an Elf, I guess. And to have noticed this from atop a horse, it can only be called as amazing.

I also climbed down and confirmed the footsteps. They were not normal footsteps. It was not the sole of shoe, but was slender long finger like. Like a leg’s bone fingers.

“A skeleton?”

“Probably. And a giant one at that.”

Going by the footsteps it must be at least three times bigger than me.

It must be an Ogre class skeleton at least or maybe a chimera type skeleton. You can't guess exactly what type it is just from the footprints but it's certain that a much higher level of monster is there.

"Did something happen, Feirona-san, Renji-sama?"

"Yeah, a little. Mururu you smell something weird?"

"Nothing different. The whole forest has a rotting smell."

She grimaced as she answered that.

In such situations, the enhanced smelling ability of beast men come in handy here but this forest was an exception to that.

"Did a troublesome monster appear maybe?"(aya)

"It is a skeleton. Probably an Ogre or chimera type……."

"To speak in Souichi's words, a boss character?"

"That's a nostalgic word. But yeah, something like that."

Back then we always called monsters so. Remembering that I started feeling nostalgic again. At first we really treated this as a game after all. Different world. Fantasy world. We were excited from a world where swords and magic ruled. So excited that we had forgotten that swords

take life and we were always near death's door.

At the same time, I also felt my nervousness fade a little as well.

After three years I felt that I really have changed. To kill and get killed. Even though I'm on an adventure unbelievable from the point of view of someone living in the modern world, here I am calming down from remembering my previous adventure. I realised that I had gotten too used to this world as well.

"Boss?"

"Meaning a strong one, something like the master of this forest. If we defeated our journey might become easier for the remaining time."

As expected, the others did know what a 'boss character' meant so I gave them a short explanation. Well it's not wrong.

"It will be easy as long as Aya blows it away."

[Why are you completely depending on others..... I'm here as well, you know?]

"Skeletons would be too tough for me."

Saying that I shrugged my shoulders on which Ermenhilde gave a sigh. It can't be helped after all; I gave an excuse. I could destroy it with an axe or hammer created by Ermenhilde but I'm not good in using either of

those. Even spears are difficult to swing around.

Also, rather than going into close combat with a weapon you're not good with, it is much more effective and safe to simply blow the target away with long-range magic attacks.

It doesn't want to cut zombies and it can't cut ghosts. And the skeleton will be too much for me. I guess it must be worried that it hasn't been of much use during this whole journey till now.

Though in my opinion that's how journeys work, to have the right person at the right job. It's not necessary for me to be able to do everything. Feirona takes care of moving through the forest, Vanguard is left to Mururu and ghosts are taken care of by Aya and Ms Francesca. Since would have been bad if I did nothing, I'm just moving to make sure everybody else can make the best of their abilities. That's also an important job in a party.

"fufu, it's fine. I have also become much stronger than what I was a year ago."

Aya said that by puffing her chest proudly on top of the horse. How dependable.

Also, if you become too strong I really might start asking you to protect me so try not to become too strong, okay?

Even though she was already much stronger than me a year ago, just how much stronger has she gotten now? I think sooner or later she really

might become strong enough to take down the Demon God alone in magic battle.

"That's good to know."(renji)

"we also have Renji-sama as well."(fran)

[that's true.]

"Unfortunately, I'll just be in the way this time."

[.....Oi.]

Bringing out the medal inside my pocket, I stroked it with my finger.

I have the will to fight but there's no one here that needs to be protected by me. Aya, Feirona, and Mururu, all three are stronger than me. Even Ms Francesca has become a reliable adventurer now. She might not be stronger than me but she should be able to protect herself at least.

In such a case, only one of my covenants will be cleared. My will to fight. That is not much different from the fight against those goblins. In such a situation, it would be difficult for me to face a skeleton. Especially if it's against an Ogre or chimera type.

To be unable to fight with a stable level of power is one of the biggest weaknesses of my cheat. There are times when three or four of my

covenants are released against mere goblins or orcs yet there are times when only one of them is released against even boss class monsters.

I don't even know how many times I have sighed at that fact. Today as well, I sighed once again. Aya looked at me probably having understood my thoughts but I decided to ignore it.

"Well, let's quickly take care of this. After the sun sets, the enemy will have the advantage."

"That's true."

I agreed with Feirona's words. It would be troublesome to be ambushed in the darkness of the night.

Due to the different world compensation/cheat, Aya also has a stronger physical body than normal but as a magician she is much weaker than someone like Souichi.

It would be better if we went all out on attack and finish it quickly, just to be safe.

"For the time being, let's keep heading east. Going by the direction of the footsteps, that skeleton seems to be moving that way as well."

"Yes. Please tell me when you find it."

"Got it."

But, well, it would be better if we did not meet it at all, I think.

I want to avoid useless battles. No matter how strong Aya is, it's never certain how the battle proceed.

You might end up endangering not just yourself but you comrades as well due to some unexpected situation. The safest would be to escape this forest without ever meeting that skeleton.

"I really want to get out of this forest already."(Renji)

[….muu.]

"Why are you sulking?"

[During this journey, I have done absolutely nothing at all……..]

I don't really mind that though. In fact, this partner of mine should learn how to depend on its comrades more. Well, I feel that it will just get angry that I depend too much on mine.

"I don't really mind either."

Aya must have heard it's voice as well since she was also consoling it. She really is cute in times like these. Maybe because she's always scolding others most of the time, this has more impact.

“Depend on me a bit more, Eru.”(aya)

[but still…]

“It will make me happy though?”

I listened to their conversation as I controlled my horse so as to not fall back behind the others.

Depend on me, eh?

Well, unlike myself, she actually has the strength to backup those words so there shouldn’t be any problem. Without the strength I tried to be like that which is why I failed so many times. Just because I’m an adult doesn’t mean I could do everything. But well, because I worked hard like that, I was able to gain the trust of my comrades.

You really don’t know how your actions could lead to any result in this world.

[…….. I know..]

The voice that answered Aya seemed somewhat proud.

[That’s why I want to be depended upon as well, by Renji.]

——-- how should I answer to that?

How should I take those words? What is the true meaning behind Ermenhilde's words? Thinking all that, I shook my head.

"I do depend on you, partner."

[I want to be depended upon like a weapon, partner.]

That would be impossible.

After all you are my comrade that I trust the most.

Kakaka, when I laughed like that, Ms Francesca and Mururu turned to look towards me. Since they cannot hear Ermenhilde's voice, they must have been surprised to see me laughing so suddenly.

This is also getting a bit troublesome as well. Maybe after some more time, I should let them hear Ermenhilde's voice as well. Well, it depends on my own convenience after all. It's only allowed to my closest comrades. It's normal to think like that right?

Chapter 29 Forest of Rotting Souls (2)

Evening, four days after entering the forest. While preparing for the camp, I looked towards the sky. Covered by mist like miasma, the setting sun could not be seen but some of its light was passing through.

I expect us to get out of this mist by tomorrow, but there's a high chance that zombies or ghosts will appear. I wonder if it's my imagination that those guys were appearing solely for the purpose of hindering our advance.

There were a lot of uncertainties like Feirona's health and the yet to be seen giant skeleton. I might be getting a bit impatient to get out of this as fast as possible but it would be suicide to travel on horses at night. Even with the elf to guide us, we will still get ambushed.

And even if I don't hurry we will get out of this mist tomorrow for sure. I can still endure for a few more days. Well, it's usually at such moments that something unexpected is bound to happen though. Going by my experiences in this world, tomorrow will definitely be a rough day for us.

While thinking such, I once again sighed at the fact that the medal inside my pocket was still silent.

[.....]

"are you still sulking?"

[I’m not sulking. I was just thinking about something.]

“Oh?”

At such a white lie, for a second I hesitated how to answer, but then decided to let it go.

Though it might not accept it, it is definitely sulking that I don’t use it as a weapon. It can be so cute at times. As I gave a slight smile, Ermenhilde sighed disappointedly. Deciding to ignore that, I focused on gathering dry branches for the fire.

“Mururu, how much have you gathered?”

“Only a little.”

As I look towards her who was doing the same thing as me, she had only gathered sticks enough which could be held in one hand.

Maybe due to the dense mist, it couldn’t be helped that most of the dead branches were moist. We were still a bit short. Even after including the ones I gathered, we will still need a bit more. She understands that as well it seems as she went back to looking for dry branches after answering me. She will not say it out loud, but she must be fatigued as well. In a rotting forest like this one, even a beast woman’s senses would go out of order, which is why she must be irritated. Though a human like me wouldn’t understand that.

“I’ll gather the rest so you can go take a rest if you want.”

“I’m fine. This is my job.”

“I see.”

One thing I understood during the journey was that this girl had a strong sense of responsibility and duty. That should be obvious from the fact that she accepted the spirit gods request alone and came to this city by herself.

But because of her absent-minded or rather careless attitude, I ended up getting an impression that she was an airheaded girl.

She’s the type that will finish what she started. Even now, she’s working hard even though she’s tired. It’s pretty amazing for kid, I really think that. Well it’s pretty normal for an adventure though.

But exactly because she treats this ‘ normal quality’ of hers as obvious, it is valuable.

“I wonder what Ms Francesca is making for dinner?”(renji)

“….. As long as I can eat it anything works.”

“haha—-that’s true.”

Though that might sound rude, I ended up agreeing with her.

During our previous journey, I was the one in charge of the. That was because I thought that Ms Francesca, as a noble, wouldn't know how to cook.

That might have been a one-sided prejudice from my side but it was correct. Yesterday's meal was prepared by her alongside Aya but……. Well, you can guess the result.

It was a dish that needed actual courage to eat it.

Aya seemed to have practised a lot in this one year. Making an ordinary dish, she came to me with such a triumphant look that I couldn't decide how to prevent. It was level apart from an year ago. Though I got scolded even when I complimented her for some reason. As expected, it was probably because I ended up telling the others how bad she was back then.

"Well, that's fun in its own way."(renji)

"Violence towards ingredients is unforgivable."

[……. You'd go that far, eh?]

Seriously, I gave a wry smile inside my mind.

Apparently this girl was not just a glutton, she actually had deep feelings for food.

It’s not really bad—— but not something to be complimented for either. Seeing that the reason for such a comment from was our own comrade, I couldn’t decide how to respond to that.

I lose no matter which side I take. Well, I guess I can only wish that Ms Francesca’s cooking skill improved quickly as days pass. Since she likes studying, I think she’ll get better soon enough.

That said, most of our meals during journey will involve just dried meat and crackers. I doubt it is easy to cook different things out of that. Though Me, Feirona or Mururu can arrange for meat by catching wild animals as well. They taste good just by roasting them. It will be great we could make a stew by using that and wild grass.

I started feeling more hungry just by thinking of that. As I rubbed my belly, small rumbling sound came.

“Renji can you…..”

“Hmm?”

A bit after collecting branches in silence, Mururu spoke up surprisingly.

When I looked towards her to answer, she had accumulated lots of branches in both her hands. Whether it be her or Feirona, I really am no match for them in preparing for camping.

“What is it?”(renji)

“can you cook?”

I looked at her with a blank face due to the sudden question. No well, I guess it’s not sudden considering we were talking about food I guess.

“I’m pretty normal I guess. I can make things eatable at least.”

Well, I don’t think I’m bad at it…….. I have made a lot of stuff and have never received complaints from Souichi or the others.

“Really?”

“Men are pretty much at that level normally. Though Feirona……. Seems like he’d be great at it.”

[That’s true. That elf does look like he’d be good.]

Going by his atmosphere he gives of a feeling that he really can do anything. Is that just because he’s handsome?

After all, the scene of him cooking feels like it could become a painting or something. In that sense, does that make Ms Francesca hopeless beauty?

…… This might sound weird considering I was the one who thought of

all this, but that really was a harsh evaluation. I definitely cannot say that in front of Ms Francesca. The first place, she is a noble lady, she probably has never cooked in her life before. I guess it's amazing that she still could produce something that could actually be eaten. Her future is something to look forward to, yup.

"What about you? Have you ever cooked before?"(renji)

"Does roasting meat count?"

What the hell. This is the first time someone actually said that..... well not really.

In the past, both Aya and Utano-san were the same as well, I remembered. It is truly a misconception that all women can cook. That's the biggest fantasy here. Well, it makes sense though. You can't expect someone who has never cooked before to suddenly make something good.

"Next time, maybe you should learn something from Aya or Feirona?"

"I prefer to just eat."

Instant reply. Unable to answer her back, I could only avert my gaze and continue gathering branches.

It truly is very Mururu-like to say something like that. I'm really worried for this girl's future.

“Say, Mururu.”

“What?”

“What are you planning on doing after completing your requested at the capital?”

“Return back to my forest….. I think.”

“I see.”

“I’m not sure. I want to try other food ——”

The moment she had said till that, she threw all the branches in her hands to the ground and quickly crept close to me.

Her white cloak got soiled but she didn’t seem to mind that and glared towards the place she was standing before. At that the abnormal presence, I also threw away my branches and drew my iron knife.

“What happened!?”

“There’s something there!!”

Next instant, Mururu slashed the empty space with her claws. With a heavy clanking sound, sparks flew all over the place.

[An enemy!?!]

“I don’t know!!”

Depending on just the slight sound of wind cutting, I also jumped backwards. When I did so, the place I was standing before burst up.

“Magic!?”

As dust clouds rose up, the invisible assailant’s weapon became slightly visible. It can hide itself in magic but not its presence or sound. While keeping on guard for another sound of wind cutting I looked at the place where the mist like miasma was slightly wavering. Probably that’s where the main body of the enemy is. It’s clearly very far away. It could be using something like tentacles to attack as well. It is an attack from out of our reach. It’s clever….. I could conclude that it was not at the same level of ghosts or zombies. And if it can even use magic, it must be a very troublesome monster. But are there really monsters of that level in this forest? Before I could answer myself, once again the sound of wind cutting came. A cold sweat ran down my spine.

Enemies location is not certain, neither is its aim. Panicking at something I couldn’t see I ended up getting a bit late deciding whether I should block or dodge.

“Kuh!?”

[Renji, fallback for now!]

I somehow took that attack with my iron knife but my left hand went numb and I dropped it.

I somehow restrain myself from screaming which I was about to leak due to the insanely heavy attack. Unable to object at Ermenhilde's advice, I did as it told and took some distance and took cover behind a big tree. On the other hand, Mururu was cutting apart through the invisible enemy's attack without leaving any opening.

Must be due to her wild instincts, or maybe she was detecting the attacks from the swaying of the dislike miasma. In any case, her skill was incredible.

"Aya! Feirona!!"

Without any sense of shame, I called for my comrades with a loud shout.

I bit my lips. Was this monster waiting for us separate? For such a highly intelligent monster to have moved, it must be confident that it could at least take both me and Mururu together.

Instincts like that come to monsters or beast men much easier than to humans like us. That was irritating in itself. I was about to call Mururu but hesitated. Until the others come I have no other choice but to have her face this monster with all her strength. I don't want to break the concentration unnecessarily.

“Ermenhilde.”

[I know.]

With those words, a silver long sword appeared in my hands.

Among the seven jade green gems embedded in its handle, two were shining. I don’t know which of the two conditions had been fulfilled but two alone won’t create a very strong weapon. I clicked my tongue in irritation but that won’t change the situation. The weapon to protect me has simply changed from an iron knife to a long sword, that’s all. I once again confirmed the swaying in the mist. From what seems to be the origin of the swaying, a tentacle like, whiplike something was attacking Mururu. It’s movements were incredibly fast. It was impossible for me to follow it with just two of my covenants released. I could only confirm that the mist was swaying.

If it goes on like this, she’ll be in danger. No matter how strong she is, I don’t know how long can she fight against an invisible enemy. She is more suited to a fast paced attacking battle. To stand in one place and take on enemy attacks is not how she fights. She probably is not moving because she would lose the movements of the opponent. If you cannot see the opponent it is better to stand your ground and focus on defence, she must have thought that way.

Should I wait for the others or should I move? Opening and clenching my left hand, I tried to get rid of the numbness.

“We are going to rush it.”

[Got it.]

Saying that, I jumped out from the cover of the big tree and rushed towards what I thought of as the origin of the swaying in the shortest distance. Due to my movements which came exactly when it's attack had been deflected by Mururu, the enemy's movement stopped for a second. It must have hesitated in deciding which one to attack first between the two.

But that hesitation only lasted a second. His aim was me. Confirming the swaying of the mist, I predicting the place and timing where the attack would come. Silver sword in my hand creaked from the impact, and my body felt like it had gone completely numb for a second. Just how strong is this monster. I screamed inside my head.

But the very next instant, this time Mururu rushed towards it. Unlike me, she closed in incredible speed and slashed with her beautiful sharp claws. The sound of something hard breaking resounded throughout the forest. But—— there was no blood.

Confirming that, both of us took some distance from the monster. The space swayed and twisted and the outlines of the monster became more and more visible. It's as must have been voided due to Mururu's attack.

The first thing I saw was that it was white. It was not a pure, beautiful white like Mururu's, it was more dull, impure—— it was bones. It's size was equal an adult elephant. Inside four legs, like a spider but body was long and slim like a centipede. It's head was like an Orc with one horn. And above all that, the most conspicuous thing was the speed at which it moved in scale; so fast that it left after-images—-

“Mu—”

My body moved faster than I could warn her.

I blocked the attack, which could even be followed, by pure intuition. The sword I was holding was blown off and my body flew unable to withstand the attack.

Next moment, my body hit the ground and I rolled and then hit the trunk of a tree as a final blow. All of the air was knocked out of my body and my vision blurred due to lack of oxygen. My body limped to the ground powerless but that lasted for only a second. Forcing my body to move again, I stood up while taking support of the tree I hit just now. It might be easier if I just fell asleep right there but I know that if I did, I won’t wake up ever again.

[Renji! Renji!!]

“I can hear you. Don’t shout in my ears……..”

The next moment, a familiar feeling entered my hands. Grabbing it with my both hands, I took the Seigan stance which is often seen in Kendo. (T/N: google seigan to see what it looks like.)

My body stiffened as I heard the sound of its foot moving. Next time, I’ll cut off its damn tail with a counter. Practically speaking, it’s really difficult but I still held the sword with full confidence.

But, no attack came towards me again. Only my own rough breathing resounded in my ears.

How long did I simply stand like that I wonder. Finally, something touched my swordtip. The next moment, I swung my sword overhead and ——

"It's fine now."

At that voice, my tension depleted. It was a voice I had become used to listening.

"——Mururu?"

"Un."

"Haaaah……"

That calm voice was definitely hers, and it proved that the battle was over. Realizing that what had touched the sword just now was her finger tip, all tension left my body.

And just like that, I fell back to the ground and took a deepe, deep sigh.

"What happened to that monster?"

"It ran away."

"……Really?"

"Un."

Even though it was a great chance to finish me off. Perhaps it plans to make sure to kill me easily after I have weakened?

That must be the case. I started feeling a bit depressed. Considering that it knew exactly when to fall back, it must be really used to hunting. Or contrary to its appearance, it's actually a coward. In either case, it doesn't change the fact that its very difficult to fight against. Almost invisible, and insanely strong as well. This is cheating really! I cursed in my head.

Suddenly I felt a pain from my right hand. On looking, I had a big, deep cut running from shoulder to the elbow. Taking on that kind of attack, I'm actually lucky that this much is all I had to bear. In the worst case, my whole arm could have been ripped off.

I feel exhausted just to have survived this but I really have to stop this from bleeding too much as well.

"Are you okay?"(mururu)

While looking at my arm, she asked worriedly.

Feeling a bit happy at that, my cheeks slackened involuntarily. Though I

got hurt, it's great that we both survived this ordeal. I felt a bit better thinking like that.

"Yeah, I'll be fine."

But we can't stay here like this. Seeing that the others didn't come here even after all this time means that something must have happened on that side as well.

As I stood up with the support of the tree again, I started walking towards what I felt was the direction the camp was in……..and then soon stopped again.

"Which way is the camp?"(mururu)

"……I'm sorry."

Due to this battle, I've completely lost our bearings. Even the tree I had marked as a landmark had been destroyed due to fight. I can't even tell which way is west and which is east.

Mururu is the same as me so she is also just standing by me.

"Oi, Feirona!!"

I shouted in a loud voice but there was no answer.

I’m certain now that something must have happened there as well. It’s not like we went very far to gather the branches anyway. They should have noticed if such a big battle happened.

The only conclusion I can get to is that they must have been attacked as well. But I doubt there would be a more than one monster of that class so nearby each other……or rather, I don’t want to think like that. Let’s try and not imagine the worst scenario directly. If I didn’t do so, we’ll just end up standing here all day.

As time passed, I thought of what to do next. It’d be too dangerous to just recklessly start running around to look for the camp as well. We’ll definitely get lost. But, it’ll be dark very soon. Then it’ll be time for ghosts to rampage. Before that, I really want to meet up back with the others.

“Mururu, can you smell where that monster or Aya is?”

I asked that but she shook her head. I feel that her wolf ears drooped a bit as well.

“Is something the matter?”(renji)

“Hm?”

“You seem very less energetic than usual.”

At the same time, I confirmed my wound as well. The cut is pretty deep but it’s not gotten to the bones. The blood vessel seem fine as well so the bleed wasn’t as profuse I had expected. A small piece of luck in

misfortune, eh? It hurts so much I could cry but I won't die at least.

I took help from mururu to rip of my left sleeve and used it to tie my right arm tightly to my side to stop the blood loss. This should hold it back a little. As the pain lessened my thoughts became more arranged as well.

"Cheer up Mururu, we'll soon meet up with Ms Francesca and others."

"Un. But will they be okay?"

"Yeah, they'll be fine. Those guys won't make a blunder like me after all."

With those 2 there, they should be able to deal with it while protecting Ms Francesca as well.

I am a bit worried but Aya's there as well. Let's believe that they'll be fine. Right our situation is the bigger problem. We're lost and have no items either. And one's injured as well. Let alone being a burden, with this kind of wound, normally you'd just abandon me. Well, I doubt Mururu's actually that cold of a person to do that though.

"With this place as the centre, let's look around a bit. We shouldn't be very far away from the camp."

"Un. We, need to treat your wound as well."

"There's that as well but I'm more worried about those guys."

We are both frontline fighters. Those three are all rear line fighters. This isn't just at the level of being a called a bad party balance. We have to really meet up fast since I'll be the next one to get targeted definitely. I have been weakened and there's really no condition for much of my covenants to get released so I can't even fight properly.

While thinking of that, I realized that Ermenhilde hadn't said anything for quite a while now.

"Oi, what happened?"

I struck my pocket with my working left hand.

[……..I'm sorry.]

For some reason, I was apologised to with a heavy sounding voice.

I ended up tilting my head in confusion. Did something strange happen I wonder? I thought but couldn't come up with anything. Is it just worried about the attack from that monster? But that had nothing to do with Ermenhilde though?

"Hm?"

[Even though I kept saying things like I want to be of use to you, this is the end result.]

“No, this isn’t really your fault you know?”

I was the one who was just weak.

In fact, it’s a miracle that we survived after facing something like that. Neither Mururu nor Ermenhilde did anything to get blamed for.

“Don’t worry about it partner. We’ll win next time.”

[…….Yeah.]

It’s still depressed. Now how should I cheer up this partner of mine who gets depressed at the weirdest of things? While I was thinking that, I felt my mantle being pulled slightly.

On looking, Mururu was looking up towards me with upturned eyes. Shit, she’s really cute.

“What is it?”(renji)

“Who are you talking to?”

Ah.

“Now that I think about it, I haven’t let you hear it, c’mon Ermenhilde, greet her.”

[What's up with that——-no, well, never mind, I guess it's fine."

Normally it'd snap at me but I guess she took more mental damage than I thought.

In my opinion, it's fine as long as I live though. As usual, its really hardheaded.

On looking at the ground, the iron knife I was using before came to my view. It had completely broken. I picked its handle but its pretty much unusable now. I just put the handle back in the sheath. Guess I'll have to depend on Ermenhilde completely from now on.

[Hm Hm, can you hear me Beastwoman?]

"!?!"

Her small shoulders jumped up in surprise. It looks like she can hear Ermenhilde.

"My name is Ermenhilde. The sword of the Hero and the GodSlaying weapon granted unto Yamada Renji by the Goddess Astrarea.]

"What kind of intro is that. I'm not suitable as a hero."

How many times do I have to say that, this idiot.

I ended up sighing.

“un, nice to meet you.”(mururu)

But, Mururu’s reaction was simpler than expected. She must have heard about me from either Aya or Ms Francesca already I guess. She must have been explained that back when a great hero like Aya took on this request.

[Mu……]

But apparently, Ermenhilde would have preferred if she was a bit more surprised I guess since she doesn’t seem to accept her reaction.

She was surprised when you spoke up first so it’s fine right? Be satisfied with just that.

“With the introductions now complete, let’s join up with Aya and the others as quickly as possible.”

If this goes on, if we get attacked again, Mururu may be fine but I’ll be dead.

Saying that, I began walking while looking for trees that could act as a landmark. I guess it’s a small blessing that terrain became easier to recognise due to the battle. I decided to look around the area with this place as the centre.

I hope we can join up with the others before the sun sets.

Just when I was being optimistic thinking that we could leave this forest by tomorrow, this happens. It's really heart-breaking but I can't really give up either.

There's someone here who's more than 10 years younger than me. I can't be the one who gives up before her. Let's do our best and keep walking. I'll take this girl to the capital safely. Definitely.

Chapter 30 Forest of Rotting Souls (3)

So as to speak simply, in the end we never found Feirona and the others.

We did reach the camp but all we found was a big hole there. Considering that Aya and the others were not there, it must be a trap laid by monsters. There are monsters who can use magic as well after all. So there's a chance they can also create pitfalls like Aya and Ms Francesca.

Seeing that I got no reply even after shouting their names there, they must be at the bottom of the hole…….. Seriously what's going on? I didn't make a mistake anywhere right?

I cant even jumped down the whole without knowing anything about its death or what would I find at the bottom. Mururu wanted to jump in but I stopped her by calming her down. There are magic which allows flight as well. For someone at Aya's level would be easy to save both of the others from that. But then, just why are those guys still inside that hole. It could be that they had already come out of that hole and were now looking for us. In any case, with so little information I can't decide how to move next.

I did think of simply waiting by the edge of the hole but even that was difficult. Hiding inside the hollow of a big tree, I questioned and thought with Mururu about what we should do next.

Whether it be wait for others here or go out to look for them, it won't be easy. Right now and incomparable amount of zombies are roaming around. This must be the work of that skeleton and not the usual ghosts.

It must be controlling the zombies. In such a situation, rather than looking for my own comrades, I feel like I'll end up becoming a comrade of those zombies instead.

"What should we do?"(mururu)

"what indeed.."

Though the hollow of the tree was big it still didn't mean that it had enough space to easily fit to people. I was stuck really close to her and every time she moved the sensation I felt would start making me feel itchy. Definitely not harbouring some wicked thoughts but, I still feel somewhat guilty for some reason.

Unlike the hollow of the tree, it seems my mind sure has a lot of free space to think about such things. I really feel speechless.

We still haven't met up with the others but I guess I'm still calm because I trust that they'll be fine. An invisible enemy is certainly a threat but Aya isn't the type of fall behind. After all, we're talking about the genius magician. She would be able to easily protect both Ms Francesca and Feirona.—— I have to trust her like that and believe that, otherwise I won't be able to move forward. At that, Mururu looked at me with a complaining gaze.

"Are you not worried?"

"It's because I trust them. I am worried about Ms Francesca but those two are also there so it should be fine."

I'm such a liar. I'm definitely worried. But I do trust them as well…… Human emotions are such a difficult thing. And if I started worrying about who would calm Mururu?

And before that there's a bigger problem here.

Though I'm trying to be not very conscious of it, my right hand hurts. I tell without even touching that I have a fever. Have my wounds festered was that attack poisoned as well? I hope it's the former at least.

After getting wounded, though not much, I did bleed. But if I was losing energy to poison it will cause serious setbacks. I'm not the only one who'll be in danger, Mururu travelling with me would also end up in danger. In the worst-case, if I become unable to move, there would be no one to protect her.

So as to not waste my energy, I tried to spend time moving as less as possible. The air inside the hollow of the tree was caught but Mururu within my arms was warm. And my right arm was even hotter. It feels as if a red hot rod has been inserted into my arm.

[I'm not sure but Aya and the others are probably at the bottom of that hole.]

After a while, suddenly Ermenhilde spoke up.

Only I can hear it's voice. It's convenient that neither that zombies or that skeleton can hear it.

"…… Why?"

[If they were above there's no way Aya and that elf would have not heard the sound of our battle.]

When Mururu are still small voice, Ermenhilde explain so.

I have the same opinion. That's the only possible conclusion I can get to seeing that Aya and the others did take any action even after all this time. But in that case, why are they not coming back up. Is there something down there? Or are they getting attacked there? In any case, we have been completely split.

"The problem is how should we meet up back with them?"(Renji)

"just go down the hole?"

"Without any means to climb back up its as good as us getting lost. I can't really recommend it."

But, what if they were in some kind of trouble down there?

Such a thought came to me but I quickly shook my head. Even then, there is only little we can do. Rather than that we first need to deal with that shitty skeleton—— that boss monster controling zombies.

At least then the biggest threat will be gone, and if luck is ours, the

zombies would go silent as well.

“Whether we go to save them or we just wait here, first we have to take care of that skeleton.”(Renji)

[that’s true. Right now only this beast woman can sense that thing we can still be ambushed.]

“……. Mururu.”(Mururu)

Suddenly, she spoke up in a small voice.

When I looked at her wondering what was the problem, her gaze was a bit angrier than her usual blank one.

“It’s not beast woman. It’s Mururu.”

Oh, so she didn’t like how Ermenhilde called her.

[Hmph, for the likes of you, beast woman is more than enough.]

“Mu……”

“This one is very stubborn in the weirdest of things. If you want to be caught by your name, you just have to work hard and get acknowledged by it.”(Renji)

I could simply tell Ermenhilde to say it, but that won't be interesting after all. Also you'll have a lot to think about when she actually gets acknowledged by Ermenhilde and gets called by her name.

Well, I would be lying if I were to say that it wasn't problematic. But, Mururu is also the type who hates losing, or rather, tries to act strong so she wouldn't stop once she's set on something. Though it may be for a simple reason like getting herself called by her name by Ermenhilde, I'm happy that she can still act normal even in such a situation. Losing to fear and going berserk is a very easy to understand death flag.

"Now then, that's enough for improving our friendship. Mururu, to have any confidence of winning against that skeleton?"(Renji)

"it will be difficult."

"I see."

Her answer was simple one. That's a good thing on its own but is not a happy thing to hear right now.

Of course, it's impossible for me as well. If I wasn't perfect condition with my right hand, I still wouldn't have any chance of winning. It seems Ermenhilde also understood that seeing it spoke nothing. Well, to be honest, I simply don't want to fight it. But if I did so we will remain in a deadlock. If we are to simply wait for the others, I can only see that skeleton attacking us just when we try to meet up. I think it has that level of intelligence at least.

We have no choice but to defeat that skeleton. For both, leaving this forest and to be the meet up with the others.

“But, we’re not going to stay here doing nothing right?”(Renji)

“yes. I will destroy that bone monster.”

“Good decision.”

That monster is definitely not invincible. Recalling the previous fight, I sorted out various information about it.

As long as we can take out its tail, Mururu should be able to deal with the rest, right?

Then first I must think of a way to destroy it’s tail. It specialises in ambushing its prey, I doubt it has experience of being ambushed many times. I might be being a bit too optimistic, but it’s a gamble worth taking.

But even before that, we have to think of a way to get near that invisible monster without getting noticed.

My head hurts. My wounded right arm hurts. And it wasn’t just slowed dull kind of pain, it’s the sharp kind, as if someone was putting a sharp needle inside my wound. This is really might be dangerous. Until we meet up with the others, I really don’t want to see and deal with this wound. If I did I will definitely become unable to move. After all I’m scared of fighting and hate pain. If I were to look at my own festered

wound, my heart would definitely break. I'm a coward after all.

"Got any plan?"(Renji)

"no, you?"

"I'll be bait and lure that skeleton out. Mururu, you use that chance to ambush it and destroy it's tail from its core."

[……. You call that a plan?]

"It is one, right?"

Or do you have a better plan? I asked it that but got no reply.

In truth, there are very few ways in which we can take action. This is a party of a beast woman who cant use her senses properly due to the miasma of forest, and a wounded guy who cant even use his cheat properly.

"You're really kind, Ermenhilde."

"You're just an idiot, Renji."

I have already decided to gamble on this. To win, and to survive and meet our comrades. Both Ermenhilde and Mururu have already understood that as well. We aren't really connected neither do we have

any strong bonds. We don't have any great memories with each other either. But still, the warmth this girl in my arms was precious.

Death is cold. That's why, I think, living beings search for warmth. I have seen lots of my friends die. Even though they were right beside me, the next moment, they were already dead. Countless times, way too many times, I have seen death. I have felt it.

"Renji, are you scared of dying?"(Mururu)

"yes, I am."

[……..Oi.]

On Mururu's sudden question, when I answered unhesitatingly, Ermenhilde gave an objecting voice.

It can't be helped. Everyone is scared of dying. After all, everything is over when you are dead. Maybe having felt my emotions, Mururu released all stiffness in her body and completely leaned on me. I was surprised for a second, but soon accepted that. This girl, is the same as me. Afraid of fighting, scared of getting hurt. Fearing death——— and doesn't want her comrades to die. The matter how confident of strong she is, she still is a child in her teens.

What do we call this again? Thinking for a moment, I quickly recalled.

The suspension bridge effect. Though it is not love, I am the only one by her side right now. She simply wants warmth. I was the same, so I put

more strength in my arms around her.

My right arm pained but it was proof that I was still alive.

“I am the same.”(Mururu)

“It’s normal. After all, when you die you can neither meet nor talk to anyone else any more.”

No matter what.

Corpses do not talk. They won’t hold your arm when you hold theirs.

There is no warmth. Only coldness.

And above all——— those left behind only have sadness. So much, that you feel like crying till there are no tears left. So much, that rather than experiencing that sadness again, it would be better to just die yourself.

That’s why neither will I die nor will I let anyone else.

If you live, you have to live for the sake of those who died as well. Facing pain that would make you feel like dying, you have to overcome it.

I don’t want to wear such feelings, neither do I want Mururu to do so either. Same for Aya and the others as well. That’s why I will live. I will put my life on a gamble and win it.

[Seriously…… Even though you're about to go and fight, is this fine?]

"It is, Ermenhilde. We live exactly because we are afraid of dying. And we will kill that monster because we want to live. Easy to understand, right?"

[Certainly it is——haah.]

Hearing that sigh, I felt surprisingly calmer.

It's the same as always. I would create trouble for Ermenhilde, and it sigh as if fed up of me.

It might be a pain for Ermenhilde but it feels really nice to me it, calms me down, these everyday exchanges.

"It will be fine."

Mururu muttered.

"I'll protect Renji."

[……Ha. Isn't it the other way round? Even though he's like this, Renji is the type of man who does things when it truly matters.]

First, I got surprised by Mururu's words, then dropped my shoulders at

Ermenhilde's.

What do you mean 'even though he's like this' huh? Well, I mean, I do get scolded a lot for not taking things seriously, I want to refute that. But when you say that directly to my face, well, yeah..

Rather than that, I want to think of more practical things right now. Even though I said I'll be the bait, there is no way that shitty skeleton will fall for a easy to understand trick. If only I had something to lure it.

My arm hurts. My head is not working. But I still must think of something. Also, rather than drowning in pessimism, is nice to see that everyone is still energetic.

"I'm the stronger one."

[.....Oi, so she says Renji. Say something back.]

"Can't refute that."

[You're supposed to!!]

But it's true, I am no match for Mururu with only two of my conditions of my covenants cleared.

At that, I reached at the question, why even two of the covenants had been cleared.

One is my fighting will. it's the usual one. But then what is the other one?

I have not made any promises with Mururu nor am I strong enough to protect her. In fact, I am the one being actually protected .

Death of my comrades. That is not cleared until I accept it myself. I don't think Aya and the others have died. The remaining two should be impossible to be cleared in this situation. One of them needs me to talk with the goddess directly and the other—— will never be cleared ever again. No matter what.

Then—

"That thing is a descendant of the Demon God.....?"

[What?]

"Our covenants. Back then when we were fighting, two of them had been released."

[Yes, that's right. But weren't those your fighting will and to protect this beast woman?]

"I was the one getting protected you know?"

[.....as usual, you self-depreciate too much.]

Even if you say that, it was a fact. In that fight, I had been unable to do anything.

“Covenants?”(mururu)

“It’s a secret between me and Ermenhilde. There are various problems due to which I cannot fight at full strength.”

“Even though you might die yourself?”

“Yes, even if I might die.”

This is really such a sad tale. To be unable to fight at full strength even when I myself am so close to dying. She really is an ill-natured Goddess, seriously. I think so from the bottom of my heart.

“…….You’re weird.”

Saying that, Mururu trembled with slight laughter while in my embrace.

“What happened?”

“What can we do to so you can fight at full strength?”

Even if you ask that, I had no way of answering this girl’s question.

If I cannot use my full strength, that meant that not just me, even

Mururu will be in danger. But, I just can't use it. I'll need some reason to protect her……or maybe, I'll have to sacrifice Mururu, who I am supposed to protect, just to use my strength. That's the limitations I have. That's why its meaningless.

I don't want anyone to die. I don't want to abandon them, I don't want to let go of the bonds I have. I don't want to lose the warmth of the girl inside my arms. Really——the cheat I wished for is a warped and twisted. To protect someone, I first have to sacrifice someone else. And even then, I won't become the strongest. To do that, to become a true GodSlayer, I'll end up sacrificing someone most dear to me.

"Then promise me."(Renji)

"Promise?"

"That you won't die no matter what. That'll you live. No matter what happens, you won't give up."

Let's end this once and for all.

We will meet up with Aya and the others and then finally get out of this shitty forest as well.

The Sun has yet to fully set but that will also end soon. The night isn't far away. It will soon be the time for the undead to roam freely.

"If you can promise me that, I will definitely take you to the capital along with everyone else."(Renji)

There was someone who embraced me like this when I was fearing death.

Afraid, shivering uncontrollably, crying, unable to move—— yet that person embraced me and gave me warmth. That person stayed by me all the time and kept on talking to me. I wonder, if that person also felt like this back then.

'I want to protect this life that I hold within my arms.' I wonder if that person also thought like that…….

I cannot meet that person right now, but maybe someday——-

"I promise you. I will definitely take all of you safely to the capital. I won't let you die."

Yes, that's why I cannot die here. I have overcome danger of this level countless times already. Compared to the Demon God or the Demon King, that thing is nothing more than a clump of bones.

I made a promise——" I will show you the world." Let alone half, I haven't even shown one fourth of it right now.

"Alright, I promise."(Mururu)

"good, then I promise as well."

I swore.

The promise same as back then, the oath I took, without saying it out loud, I carved it inside my mind.

—— This time definitely, I will protect. I am not a hero protagonist, I am a god slayer.

If the enemy is a descendant of the Demon God, I can fight. I can kill it. I exist for that reason, and Ermenhilde is the weapon to fulfil that reason.

After killing the Demon God, and exterminating his descendants———- I searched for a way to live other than as a weapon for Ermenhilde. So that I can live with the God slaying weapon even in this world where a God slaying weapon was not needed any more.

For this selfish wish of mine that even the goddess could not fulfil, I cannot die here.

“I will not die.”(Mururu)

“I will definitely not let you die. We’ll all live and go to the capital.”

I closed my eyes. I smelled the faint scent coming from her, different from my own sweat or the muddy smell of the forest, ——it was the scent of a girl.

My heart calm down from that. Somehow, I feel that my thought

process is kind of perverted but I needed some way to calm myself. And there is no way I would harbour any evil thoughts towards Mururu.

She is in her teens. The same age Aya had when she was summoned here.

If I tried to lay a hand on her, I will be an inexcusable pervert. In the first place I'll probably get beaten before I try something like that. When I think of that, all thoughts of actually doing something disappear from my mind. In fact, she feels more like a daughter to me.

I had only closed my eyes for a second.

[fumufumu. I am definitely telling this to Aya later.]

"Try to read the mood, you idiot."

[That aside, Renji.]

It didn't even try to refute it. Sometimes it really acts very humanlike.

[Will you protect me as well?]

"Have no fear."

While sighing, I got out from the hollow of the tree. I gave a wry smile, as if expecting something, as if I thought of something mischievous.

There were no zombies. Probably, that skeleton is not here either. I couldn't hear it nor could sense it. I'm not sure if that thing is really a descendant of the Demon God, I might be wrong. But, I'm sure that it will definitely try to attack me, who is wounded, over Mururu.

For now, I asked Mururu to hide herself inside that hollow of the tree. Now we just have to wait for it to jump on the bait that is me. Let's hope that it's an idiot simple enough to fall for a plan like this.

Slightly away from that tree hollow, I sat down with my back to a moderately big tree. My right hand still hurts but thanks to that, my head feels clear.

"If we die, we die together partner."

[……. I honestly don't feel very happy about that.]

If possible, I hope it attacks is before its night time.

I wonder if I'm being too optimistic?

Now that I think about it, I wonder how much Mururu knows about me. Seeing that she wasn't really surprised at Ermenhilde's voice, she must know my connection Aya and the others—-to the heroes.

After the fight is over, I think I should ask her. For that reason as well, let's just quickly get rid of that shitty skeleton. Thinking till that, I gave a

sigh.

Was this a death flag?

Chapter 31 Forest of Rotting Souls (4)

I wonder how long I stood there exposed to the miasma. With the sound of grass rustling, I looked that way. What appeared was not our invisible attacker as I was hoping for. It's flesh was rotten, white bones could be seen; it was a rotting zombie. It was wearing a completely ragged piece of cloth, as if it had been attacked by a wild dog or something.

Like the zombies that appear in games, its limbs were intact but it was missing its lower jaw. Was that shitty skeleton watching us from somewhere?

"Well, I guess it can't be helped."

*Heave-ho*I stood up.

My waist, more like my whole body hurts. The miasma isn't the only reason my body feels so heavy. The pain in my right arm seems to be growing worse every minute. But it's not like I cannot move it. It hurts like hell but I can still put strength in it. I can still hold a sword.

But I don't know when I'll become unable to move it. Thinking about how I have to face that monster in such a condition, I feel like crying. After the first zombie, as if they had prearranged it, more of them appeared one by one.

[Quite a lot have gathered.]

“Seriously. I’m an injured guy here, I wish they’d take it easy a little——don’t you think so, Ermenhilde?”

As I muttered its name, a jade coloured long sword that I had grown accustomed to using appeared in my hand. It is the double edged long sword I am most used to using in this world. With a single swing, the sound of air cutting came to my ears.

Ah, this is it. This is the sword. My palms shifted to get accustomed to it. It has just the right weight. It feels as if it is an extension of my own arm. I realised that my face had relaxed a bit at that. On the end of the sword’s grip were seven gems inlaid in a jade jewel. Three of them were currently lit.

My right arm pained again. But that pain only cleared my thoughts. It reminded me what I had to do.

“Let’s make Mururu speechless.”

[…… Are you alright?]

And actually worried voice came from inside my pocket. Finding it amusing, my lips relaxed into a smile.

“That’s rare. Normally you would be the one who’ll keep on telling to act like a hero.”

The situation should be exactly what Ermenhilde is always wishing for, isn’t it?

For someone, for something—— put your life on the line, and to protect it. It's what people expect of heroes. That was unparalleled strength, victory, and safety. Unfortunately, neither of those are things which I could grant them.

But, just for now, just for this moment. Let's gamble with my life on the line. I'll draw out that shitty skeleton, and kill it.

[Your face looks pale.]

"It's the same as usual."

Put strength in my arm that held the divine blade. Three zombies had appeared. The number isn't really that great but given time, that will also increase. Though that would not be good for Mururu who is supposed to be on the lookout of a chance to make a surprise attack, the undead relentlessly seek the living after all. They'll keep on coming here as long as living people are here.

But that is my aim. Well the one waiting for us is not a small fry like a zombie or ghosts, it's a shitty skeleton that might be a descendant of the Demon God. With a voice only I and Mururu can hear, Ermenhilde gave an order to Mururu to not move.

My dominant right arm won't work here. There are no comrades to save me. Only three of the covenants had been released. My enemies are countless zombies and ghosts and a mysterious skeleton. Even though it's a despairing situation, for some reason I felt not even a fragment of despair.

Zombies continue to move through the grass towards me. Slowly, as if dragging their legs, scraping of their own flesh by hitting the roots of trees and raising a indescribable sound less voice of resentment. To kill the living me, to eat me and make me one of theirs.

"Injury, the poison, this hopeless situation——- this is not the first time I'm facing one!"

Forcefully moving my heavy body, I slashed. I aimed for the body with force strong enough to not just slice but to completely crush it. The rotting flesh, the damaged muscles, broken bones; I mowed it all down and split its body to 2 pieces. I split not its stomach but its heart. But that wasn't enough to kill it. Actually, I had aimed for its neck but my aim went wrong. The fact that I wasn't using my dominant arm, and maybe due to the fever I have, my senses have been disrupted. In any case, first I must face the zombies coming at me to live.

The zombie I cut apart fell down to the ground. And the next moment, crushed it's head with my right foot. That was the first one.

Going with the momentum, I slashed again. The zombie coming at me from behind was blown away. Maybe because it was a fresher corpse, and left-arm's power alone wasn't enough to split this one apart and my sword stopped in its shoulder. But I pulled it out with brute strength and blasted that zombie away.

[Renji, to the right!]

Complying with Ermenhilde's words, I jumped to the right. I rolled on

the ground move away as pebbles and twigs hurt my skin. That kind of hurt.

But, the third zombie was about to leap on to where I was standing before. If I had got bitten by those rotten teeth, I would definitely get poisoned or get some really weird disease.

The jade sword turned to magical energy disappeared, and it its place appeared a dagger which I threw which then, pierced into its head. Another dagger appeared in my hands. It was throw with my left hand but I have trained enough to be able to use both hands for throwing. Though not as fast as my right hand throws, if I aim properly before throwing, it will definitely hit its target, the zombie's face.

Silence. The short battle correct. Well, there were only three of them after all. Even goblins could be said be worse than this for now at least. After all, they are fast and work in teams.

While I was thinking of such things, once again the grass made noise. Newer zombies appeared. They must have been attracted due to the battle. Or maybe they simply smelt a living human. In any case, that doesn't change what I have to do.

I gave a quick glance towards my right arm. Blood was dripping out of the simple treatment I had done by wrapping a cloth around the wound.

"I really hope the main guy comes quickly."

[Yeah, that's true…… Think you can hold on till then?]

“I will, somehow.”

I slashed away those zombies’ heads as they move towards me.

Fuuu, I breathed out. The skeleton had yet not appeared. No, I simply had not sensed it and it was simply lurking around here. It is invisible, has no presence, and neither has any smell. Inside this rotting forest, it might be the worst enemy to face. If Aya was here, at least there was the option to completely burned down the whole forest along with it.

As I thought all that, more zombies appeared. Three again. Must have been villagers from nearby. There were two who were in tunics. The last one, was probably a soldier from the capital. It was a zombie with quite the good equipment on it.

If this was a game, I would get lots of experience points from it. Oh well, zombies don’t drop a lot of money even in games though. Thinking of such things, I calm myself again.

I wonder if Mururu has noticed already. So as to not let her realise that, I must fight flashily.

Aah, my hand really hurts. Flapping my mantle, I ran with a speed that blasted off soil behind me. With a single slash, I cut apart the legs of the two zombies in tunics. I stepped on one of the zombies’ neck to crush it. The feeling of flesh and bone getting crushed came through my leather boots to me. It is disgusting but I cannot stop either. Going with the momentum, I closed in on the armoured zombie.

This one is troublesome. Even if I have Ermenhilde, I still need a lot of strength cut through armour. I doubt one slash will be enough. But, I'm also confident my skill. I aimed for the joints. My attack on its elbow was blocked by its gauntlet. It's really difficult to make detailed adjusted attacks with my left arm. Clicking my tongue on missing the attack, I jumped back to try again.

The next moment, it's long sword struck the place I was standing before. Without any technique, it was an attack based on brute strength due to its the ground had exploded a little. At the same time, a large amount of blood started flowing out of that zombie's right elbow. Did its rotting flesh snap, did its bone rip through the flesh?

The weapon in my hand turned to magical energy once again and then instantly formed a rapier.

"Too slow."

I pierced through the gap in its helmet.

[In terms of technique only, you're equal to all other heroes after all.]

"No way, I was just trained too well by that monster."

Once again the weapon in my hand disappeared by converting into magical energy. And then, once again a long sword appeared in my hand.

The strongest human I know of, the Knight commander, was the one who taught me the way of the sword. Daggers, long swords, heavy swords, Katanas. As for the remaining weapons, I simply taught myself how to use them during the journey. That's why, I am the most comfortable while using swords.

[……. It still hasn't come.]

"It's only normal."

[What?]

"If I was that skeleton, I would also try to kill my opponent with just zombies. There would be no need for me to show myself after all."

As I was talking, more zombies appear. This time, they were just human type, there were even animals like dogs, goblins and orcs.

Give me a break. I felt like crying.

[But that means——- it would never appear, isn't it?]

"Yes, exactly as you say."

As long as I had my dependable jade coloured long sword in my hand, my partner with me, I can keep on going like this.

It’s really weird. Is this what trust is like?

While thinking of such foolish things, I kept on fighting even in this despairing situation. I’m not alone, to have someone to talk with you is really a important thing. I have two keep on fighting till our invisible attacker decides to show itself after all.

“—— let’s do this.”

[Yeah.]

My concentration heightened.

If it was me I would not show myself to the enemy. Because it’s dangerous.

But that skeleton did appear back then. And by doing that, it made us realise that there was an enemy we could not see. Thanks to that, we ended up in this situation. I have to be reckless like this to make the enemy appear.

And after that, when it appears, I will crush it. Destroy it, literally. It’s as simple as that.

.

.

.

“Wow—— that shitty skeleton really isn’t showing itself.”

[……]

How many zombies have I killed already? By breaking was ragged. My left arm felt heavy. The pain in my right arm was also increasing constantly and my body was in a bad condition due to running out of stamina.

Ignoring my fatigue, I swung the jade divine blade. If I stopped, I will die. Zombies are slow, but are physically strong. If I get caught by them in my current condition, I will really be in danger. That’s why I cannot stop. Disrupting the zombies by moving around, I cut off their heads and crush them down.

Along with the miasma of the forest, my own sweat was making me feel sick as well. From the blood spraying out of the zombies—— the dead humans, my mantle and my clothes had been completely dirtied. Looks like I’ll have to buy a new set of clothes after this. Though not as bad as my right arm, the number of small wounds on my body also increased. They were not really expensive, but I was quite attached to these clothes.

“Let’s buy some new clothes when we get to the capital.”

[…… You are still quite relaxed, aren’t you?]

“Not really, to be honest.”

No matter how amazing the weapon, depending on its user, its power is limited.

Monsters are much more used to fighting than people. Monsters, the Demon King – – – and even the Demon God. To fight such existences, technique alone is not enough. What's necessary is the power to fight. Just like the humans and Demi humans of this world use magic to fight, just like beast men like Mururu depend on physical ability to fight.

But I don't have any of those. I don't have any incredible cheat like Souichi and the others, neither do I have magical energy. All I have is the fighting technique I through literal desperation. I do not have overwhelming power needed to be called a hero. Technique that any could learn would always be defeated by absolute power.

"But, it looks like this farce will soon end…… Is Mururu fine?"

[Hm?]

If it's her, she should have already noticed.

The atmosphere of the area changed. It was very minute, but there was definitely a change. This was my intuition, that had been trained after getting someone to this world and going through countless fights. Distribution has saved my life countless times already. It's difficult to explain, but I do trust it. All that remains is for me to throw all of that shitty skeleton's attention towards me.

Ah, I really feel like crying, I have already worked so hard to defeat that Demon God after coming to this world. Why do I have two go through so much even after I completed my job?

Sound of wind cutting reached me. No—-

“it’s here.”

As I jumped backwards, the ground rumbled from the shockwave. The countless zombie corpses flew into the air.

Magic. That too, it is a wind shockwave type that’s not visible. This really is a monster that is specialised in stealth moves. My mantle blew from the shockwave, and the mist like miasma distorted.

I’m specialised in close combat, so if I let it attack from long-range, I’ll have no chance of winning. Well, it should also understand that as well. There was no surprise or impatience.

I will have to make that shitty skeleton think that it cannot defeat me with just magic. After facing the zombie army, this time I have to overcome invisible magic.

It will be easy, easy. I persuaded myself like that.

[Where did that come from!?]

“Who knows? If Aya or Feirona are here, they could probably sense the

flow of magical energy to tell that though.”

If a few more of my covenants had been released, I would have become able to do that as well. But that would be difficult in the current situation. I once again looked at the jewel set on the handle of my sword. Just like before, three of them were shining. It would have been so much easier if it actually told me exactly which one of the conditions had been cleared. I grumbled my complaint that I had thought of so many times.

I clicked my tongue then jumped, and hid myself in the hollow of different tree than Mururu.

In my line of vision, there was no distortion in the miasma. The place where the magic was fired was still swaying but that won’t be the right direction. While I was thinking that, the tree I was hiding in got broken in half.

Clicking my tongue again, I moved to the shadow of a different tree. Protected by the tree, the shockwave didn’t come to me but a sharp ran through my cheek. A fragment of wood had flew which sliced my cheek slightly. I wiped off the flowing blood with the back of my left hand.

“Could you see where that came from?”

[——sorry.]

“Don’t mind it, I couldn’t either.”

It’s really pathetic but first we have to find out where our enemy is.

Going by how the tree I was hiding in was broken, it isn't behind us. I peeked out from the cover of the tree and instantly, the tree was snapped. It didn't completely break apart but a chunk of wood the size of my head was blown off. That was proof that this skeleton's magic power wasn't normal. If that had hit me directly, my head would have been blown away completely.

Not just its tail attack, even its magic is top class. That black Orc I fought in that village also used magic but this is on a different level. Even though they're both descendants of the Demon God, howcome they have such a difference in ability? Is it related to their faith and piety to the Demon God maybe? Though there shouldn't be much difference between a pig and a skeleton. Seeing as the pig has a brain at least, it should have more faith right?

Rather than such useless things, let's focus on how to find this shitty skeleton right now.

I couldn't figure out where the attack came from even during the last attack. Though the wind shockwave itself may be invisible, it shouldn't be able to hide the distortions in the mist as well.

"What should I do?"

[You talk as if we have lots of options to decide what to do next.]

"That's true, I guess. As expected of my partner, you sure get to the point."

I was successful in luring it out, now as long as I can make it visible——

While I thought till that, something fell down from the sky. While breaking the branches of trees, a giant 3m bone fell to the ground. It must be light since it was only a bone since it didn't create much of a tremor on falling. Since the shockwave was less, it soon began moving again. It seems it didn't take much damage either. And, after a second, Mururu came down beside me.

"I found it."(mururu)

"So it seems."

As Mururu told me that as if it was perfectly normal, I could only shrug my shoulders. She had already gone into combat mode.

And next, we both jumped out of the cover of the tree. But, as if it was expecting it, it slammed its whip-like tail to the ground. Was it trying to intimidate us? Must be because it became visible after taking damage from falling down.

"The tail.."(mururu)

"Hm?"(renji)

"Sorry. I was unable to destroy its tail."

"No need to apologise. In fact, I'm glad that you were at least able to

find it for me."

So it was above in the trees. Well, I wouldn't have realized that. Since it was so big, I had not thought of that possibility. But apparently, since its just bones, its actually pretty light in weight seeing as it didn't make much of a sound even though it fell from so high.

I wanted to rush in to attack while it was still disoriented but, that tail really is in the way.

"It's amazing you sensed it there actually."(renji)

"I was too slow. I had been faster….."

"I said don't mind it. You did save me."

[……..You're being pretty kind with this beastwoman aren't you?]

Not really, I think.

The skeleton fully recovered. 8 spiderlike legs and the body of a snake. The swinging whip-like tail mowed down the trees and a head that had a horn like an ogre's.

"Let's split up. The one that doesn't get attacked by the tail will aim to destroy it."(renji)

“Got it.”

At the same time, I ran towards the right and Mururu ran to the left. The tail’s target was —Mururu. It must have concluded that Mururu was more dangerous than me.

“Ermenhilde, let’s do this!”

[Yeah!!]

In place of my jade long sword, a giant hammer appeared in my hands. I held it with both my hands but it wasn’t actually that heavy. Resting the hammer on my shoulders, I ran with it. Against bones, shock type weapons work better. Swords are easier swords are easier to use, but hammers have more power. I can break its tail with one strike.

The giant hammer portion was Jade green and its handle was golden. At the end of the handle a Jade jewel was present and the number of gems shining inside it were for. With a speed higher than what I had against zombies, I quickly rushed towards the rear of the skeleton.

The fight between Mururu and the skeleton had already begun. Mururu swiped away the attacks from the tail, that had a speed I could finally follow with my eyes now, with her claws. The matter how strong her claws were she won’t be able to take on the attacks from the tail forever. My aim was the root/joint of the tail.

But apparently my intentions were seen through and an invisible magic ball attack was fired towards me. With the help of the distortions in the

mist and my own intuition I was able to avoid a direct hit but, my movement speed fell down. I ended up clicking my tongue but I couldn't fall back right now. If I did I would only increase the burden on Mururu. That alone I must avoid. No matter if it was Mururu on me that ran towards it, the skeleton made for a tough opponent.

Avoiding the magic ball, I sweep it away. The number of magic balls it was firing towards me was too great. I felt astonished at the amount of magical energy this thing possessed. Also, due to the magic balls, the zombie corpses that were getting blown here and there were getting in my way. I ended up having to dodge through this surprise barrage of corpses as well.

To be able to face both of us alone, it truly is a descendant of the Demon God. It's on a completely different level from that Black Orc and ogre. It's a strong enemy I have fought many times alongside Souichi and the others—— with the heroes.

[Are you alright, beast woman!?]

"It's not beast woman, my name is Mururu."

Reacting to Ermenhilde's voice, I also looked towards Mururu. She had fallen back quite a lot from the place she had first started fighting the skeleton. With that small physique of hers, the burden from the attacks of the tail must be more than I thought.

But due to the excessive magic balls, I couldn't close in either. The blood of the zombies blowing apart mixed in with the mist becoming a red smokescreen. And in the middle of that battlefield student 3 m

spiderlike, snakelike skeleton.

It's as if I'm facing the devil. I muttered to myself.

"Tch."

It really is very strong. Just because it prefers ambushing and surprise attacks doesn't mean it was weak, I guess.

While facing off against Mururu, it is able to fire so many magic balls towards me as well. There's a chance it might even use a wide range magic if we were to give it the composure to use it. If it actually use that, I'm one thing, but Mururu will definitely not come out of that safe.

We couldn't stop our attack at any cost. But, it was a fact that we couldn't close in on it either. If only another one of my covenants had been released——

While slipping through the rain of magic balls, I ended up thinking of such stupid things. The only one I could clear right now, was the permission/approval from the goddess Astrarea. Just that alone. The other two, I definitely cannot clear right now.

[Tchh—— Renji, the beast woman is in danger!]

"I know!"

Glancing towards Mururu, she had stopped taking on the tail attacks

and was now is just dodging them.

Sorry, I could only apologise inside my head. If only I could destroy the tail quickly. But due to facing that zombie army just now, I'm also low on stamina. My right hand's pain has gotten so worse than it has gone numb. Let alone my hammer, I'm not sure if I will be able to swing a sword properly. I'm currently going on solely on adrenaline. Once that wears out, I will become unable to move. Before that, I must defeat the skeleton.

I still continue to dodge the magic bullets. Suddenly a *Don*sound, different from the magic ball striking the ground, resounded in my ears. When I looked towards Mururu, the skeleton's tail had pierced into a tree.

My thoughts cleared. Without even trying to think what had happened, I quickly rushed towards the skeleton. Putting strength in my arm holding Ermenhilde, at the same time Jade green coloured magical energy gushed out.

In an instant, I was exactly beside the skeleton. I ran,ran and ran——!!

"Go to hell!!"

The Skeleton pulled out its tail from that tree and moved.

But it was too slow.

Before it could react, I brought down the hammer. The Jade green magical energy converged and disappeared right in the middle of the

tail.

At the same time, it fired countless magic balls towards the defenceless me who was currently in a swinging motion. I rolled on the ground countless times before finally stopping after hitting a zombie corpse. It reeks of blood, or rather smells of rotting flesh.

But finally, the first step was over. I stood up using the hammer as support. Seeing Mururu's rare worried face, I ended up showing a smile.

"Now the real thing starts."

[Yes, let's do this. We have to quickly defeat it and then search for Aya and the others as well after all.]

Seriously. This is not even the end. There are so many things I have to do. That alone made me depressed.

[We need to treat your wounds as well.]

"Unfortunately, you can't do anything about it. I'll try and have Ms Francesca treat me."

[……..]

Yeah. My whole body hurts like hell.

Well, this never was an easy opponent from the start. When I looked towards Mururu, she did not have any signs of giving up right now. But, she was breathing heavily. Facing the tail must have taken a toll on her stamina.

Our opponents still has its magic and there is a chance it might have some other trump card as well. It is the type that uses surprise attacks even though it's so strong. Though it's not good to be overcautious, it would be stupid to get overconfident of our victory as well.

"Let's finish this, Ermenhilde, Mururu!"

[Yeah, it's time to settle this battle.]

"…… Got it."(Mururu)

Mururu spoke in her usual soft voice. It's difficult to hear, but it's very like her.

I felt a bit calmed from that. And fight, win, survive, meet up with Aya and the others, and then head to the capital.

For that——

"I am the one who killed your master!"(Renji)

I don't know if it understood my words. But my attack, my Jade green magical energy, it should understand who I am. As if it switched its target

from Mururu to me, it turned its skeleton face towards me.

Yes, that's right. I killed him. On that hellish battlefield. In that place where countless people died, countless lives were lost.

For just a second, I closed my eyes.

Black, Black, Black, Black—— I killed that Demon God, that had the shell of the colour of darkness, with my comrades, together with them…….. With Ermenhilde.

"I will kill you, you fucking skeleton."

As I opened my eyes, I spoke what I had sworn.

As if howling without vocal cords, it struck it's spiderlike 8 bone legs on the ground.

Chapter 32 Forest of Rotting Souls (5)

Avoiding the strike from the legs of the skeleton, I closed the distance between us along with Mururu. It must be trying to prepare for a big magic attack. After having its tail destroyed, the skeleton's movements have become dull.

The restraining barrage of magic also lessened, and it was just frantically attacking us with its legs. Me aside, there's no way it could strike Mururu with attacks like that. It's eight legs were still in full health but it's rib-like bones were in tatters.

But even then, it wasn't using magic right now. But at the same time, even though it was getting attacked by Mururu so much, it did not leave a gap for me to close in on it. Had my own movements gotten duller? Or was it simply cautious against me? While wielding the hammer, I clicked my tongue for the nth time as my attack was thwarted again.

[What happened, Renji?]

"It's nothing."

My breathing got rougher. Before I knew it I had run out of breath. And to think that I was actually quite proud of my stamina.

While holding the hammer with both hands, I glanced at my right hand. That wound. The fact that I have stopped feeling pain from it means it really must be turning very dangerous. That alone made me feel like giving up, but I couldn't do that just yet. I ended up strangely laughing

instead at that. Seriously…….. Why do I always get involved in such troublesome things? Do I just have bad luck, or am I being haunted/possessed by something? The fact that I could actually think of something /someone like that, I was left speechless.

“You’re worried about me?”(Renji)

[…….Muu]

“I’ll be fine. I hate fighting, but I don’t plan on losing.”

When I said that, I could feel surprise coming from Ermenhilde. This one is so easy to understand. Maybe that’s why, it’s my partner.

I don’t plan on losing. I cannot lose.—— if I did, I will die. I’ll pass on dying inside this remote forest.

“This is why I hate duking it out with monsters.”

[…….Hm?]

“It’s nothing. Let’s go, Ermenhilde——”

I gave a glance towards Mururu, and without any need to talk, we both charged towards the skeleton together.

The skeleton is definitely concentrating more on me, I can feel it.

I avoided it's attack that could split opening round. Next, I use my momentum to quickly close in on it but, it used its other leg and swung an attacked towards me. I blocked this attack with the handle of my hammer.

"——Guhh!?"

The force behind it was incredible, at the same time my right hand hurt again. Due to this one attack, I was quickly distanced away from it again. It's a blessing that I don't get blown away like from the attack of the tail but, there is simply too much of a gap in the physical strength of monsters and humans. The fact that we still have two win this is exactly what makes this difficult. If we hadn't been split away from Aya and the others, I wouldn't have hesitated even a second before running away from an opponent of this level.

While I was taking on it's attack, Mururu to close the distance with the skeleton and slashed at its body. Those sharp claws shaved off the bone and created cracks on it. We're definitely, slowly, driving it towards a corner. At a single glance I could tell the amount of wounds had grown on the skeleton's body.

But even then, somewhere deep in my mind I was still feeling a bit of unease. Will an enemy as strong and fearsome as this go down so easily. There is no way that would happen.

"You okay?"(Mururu)

"yeah, no problem here. You?"

Mururu, who had appeared beside me before I could realise, asked me that.

Her worried gaze as she looked up towards me made me feel a bit awkward/embarrassed.

Mururu as well was starting to run out of breath. On looking closely, I realised that her pure white clothes and hair had become dirty. There were small bleeding wounds here and there on her white skin as well.

I really want this fight to end soon, so that she can take a bath at least. Though, if a guy like me said it, I'll be treated like a pervert.

As we stood together, the skeleton stored moving and just assessed situation probably because it was cautious of both of us being together. Even when it is about to use magic, it did give off any specific sensation.

"I can still go on."(Mururu)

"then, I'll take on its attack. Just like before, you close in and strike at it."

"….. You sure?"

"Yes, I will be fine."

She must have realised from the irregularity in my voice. Not just her gaze, even her voice sounded worried. To give her a sense of relief, I gave

a smile……. Though I hope my lips aren't cramping.

It can be helped. I don't have much experience of giving a smile while being aware of it. I don't know how she took my smile that I gave while glaring at the skeleton, I did feel that Mururu calmed down a bit.

"Let's just finish this already. I'm starting to get tired of this."

"Un."

[You guys really lack a sense of tension, you know…….]

"As if I'd get tensed from a danger of this level."

Both me and Mururu gave a slight smile at Ermenhilde's words.

It's not like we're facing some overpowered monster, there is no way I'll feel tensed. The skeleton is definitely above my skill level, but I know monsters far stronger than this shitty skeleton.

It might sound strange but fighting and extremely strong enemy adds to your experience. And I have definitely fought monsters that are much much stronger than this skeleton. That experience, the fact that I was able to survive against those monsters, is one of the very few weapons I possess.

"Let's go!"(Renji)

“Yeah.”

In the first place, it’s not like I have any other actions to choose from. I cant avoid this skeleton’s attack, and that skeleton only aims for me. Then, I can only act as bait. It’s not really different from our original strategy. Well, it’s so amateurish that it really can’t be even called a strategy though.

Once again, I ran towards the skeleton with Mururu. As expected aim was still me as those spiderlike legs came towards me. I took on that attack, and averted it. At the same time, Mururu closed in to deal in an attack. But this time the enemy is way of protecting was different. Suddenly, a chill ran down my spine and I had a bad premonition.

“It’s coming!!”

The next moment, the ground beneath Mururu rose and attacked by becoming spears of stone. But as if she had already seen through that attack, Mururu use those protruding Spears as foothold and made a leap. And with that momentum dealt a attack to the skeleton’s head. What agility! So this is what it means to be left speechless.

It’s not like she has some kind of cheat like us either. There are few who are able to fight like that even then. Even if she is a beast woman, that was really incredible.

But, I can’t just stand here amazed. The magic that attack Mururu activated once again even while it took damage.

“Kuh!?”

[Dodge, Renji!!]

Don’t ask the fucking impossible!!

I was able to avoid a direct hit but, my left leg got cut. This is getting really ridiculous, that shitty skeleton. Can go invisible, can use magic, and is also a fucking descendant of the Demon God.

While frowning from the pain in my leg, I avoided the second and the third spear. Just when I was thinking that it was only attacking from below, an invisible magic ball was fired towards me. Unable to sense that surprise attack, I blocked it with my hammer’s handle only to get blown away. Fortunately it hit the handle, but I won’t get lucky the second time. I quickly stood up, and began running. For the time being, I must keep on moving otherwise I’ll get killed by getting pierced by those spears. My newly wounded leg also hurt but I decided to ignore it.

Mururu was moving even better than me but even she was unable to find a chance to close in. Stone spears and invisible magic balls, and even attacks from the eight bone legs. She’s facing an even worse situation than me, it’s amazing that she is still avoiding any direct hit.

I was a bit bewildered due to the sudden fierce attack but, the enemy doesn’t get time to relax either. After all, it had also taken quite a lot of damage. I put more strength in my arm holding the hammer. I must get in an attack somehow. And finish it off.

But, how?

I questioned myself. It's attacks were fierce, I won't be able to slip through all that. Now that my left leg is hurt as well, I am in a situation where even running is difficult. Even though I'll get killed if I stopped, I need to find a way to kill my opponent as well.

[……. Are you, okay?]

"Do I look like okay?"

Without answering to Ermenhilde's worries, I questioned it back instead. I only got silence in reply. It's only normal. After all, my right hand is in a condition where I cant even feel the pain from my own, not to mention the amount of small wounds on my body are only growing in number. And one of the newest wounds on that list is on my legs that is pretty much my lifeline right now. Now I'm not even sure how long I can continue moving around.

It's now or never right now. But then again, I only have 4 of my covenants released. It's far from satisfactory. Against a descendant of this level, I'm not sure if this much power would be enough to take it down.

"But, of well, I can't give either anyway."

I can't lose. I must not lose here.

Even in such a deadly situation, I cannot give up. I must face it on. To not get killed, I must kill it first. I must continue fighting.

Even though I hate that style of living. Even though that lifestyle is similar to that of a hero from which I had run away.

I'm being made to take up that style living once again.

It's the situation Ermenhilde has always been wishing for. But that Ermenhilde was currently being worried for me rather than focusing on the enemy skeleton. If you're going to proclaim yourself as just a weapon, then don't hold emotions like that, seriously. That's why I don't want to see you as just a weapon. And if you wish for the Hero Yamada Renji, then just put all your trust in me.

But I who never believes in absolute victory——am definitely not a Hero.

Me and Ermenhilde. We are neither a Hero nor a weapon. We're just a pair of a human who killed a God and his partner who completely trusts in him.

That's all, I want. That's how it should be.

"Now, then…."

I faced the skeleton. His empty eyesocket's glare pierced through me.

In its supposedly non-existent gaze, I could feel it confident of its victory. Even though its just a mere skeleton.

“Don’t underestimate me, you fucking skeleton.”

The next moment, its left half along with its four legs disappeared in a ray of heat. At the sudden appearance of the intense blinding light, I used my left hand to cover my eyes. That magic attack bore through the ground, split the clouds and pierced the heavens above. In this world where sun had already set, the radiance of midday sun appeared for a few seconds. There was only one in this whole world who could use a magic of that level of power. I did trust in them but…….finally confirming their safety, I truly felt relieved. All that happened in an instant but was definitely real. Having lost its one half, the skeleton fell to the ground. It felt as if it was an animal bowing towards a powerful being. Well, the powerful being here is not me though.

“……What just?”(Mururu)

“As usual, she’s really flashy.”(renji)

I only replied that to Mururu’s mutterings.

I started walking towards the fallen skeleton. It didn’t try to attack me with magic any more. You need to concentrate a lot to use magic. Having lost four of its legs, even as a skeleton, it should be difficult for it to concentrate properly.

Feeling not even a shred of sympathy for that skeleton, I went close to its head and raised my hammer.

It’s one horned ogre-like skull rose up slightly as it looked straight at

me.

"_____"

And just like that, without saying anything, I crushed it's head.

No matter how harsh the battle had been, the end is always like this. No sense of excitement, completely anticlimactic. If a movie had such a finale, it would be at the level that the audience would start asking for their money back. This is even more so against monsters. Since we cannot understand each other's words, there is no reason to even ask for their last words.

Remaining in the same pose after ringing my hammer down, I breathed a sigh.

"I'm tired."(Renji)

[That's the first thing you have to say?.....]

"But it's very typical of me to do so right?"

[It's pathetic..... How deplorable.]

Well, sorry.

The hammer disappeared by turning into Jade coloured magical

energy, and my body lost all its strength. With the descendant of the Demon God dead, most of my released covenants closed again. It really is pathetic.

"It's over?"(Mururu)

"Yeah."

The skeleton turned to black mud and disappeared into the ground. It's the same as the previous descendants of the Demon God I had fought. After confirming it till the very end, finally I sat down on the ground.

"That attack, was that you Renji?"(Mururu)

"That wasn't me. It was Aya."

On seeing the hole at our camp, I had realised that they were underground but I never would have thought that she would fire magic from underground. There was a chance that either Mururu or me would have also get hit by it and have half of our bodies blown away.

Thinking that made me shudder but, well, all is well that ends well. Let's leave it at that. If I started pondering too much on that, I'll probably become unable to sleep.

Beside the hole that had been created from the magic attack that had destroyed the skeleton, both me and Mururu sat down. By the way, the size of the hole was 2 m in diameter. Both me and Mururu would have definitely perished if that attack had grazed us even a little..... I should

stop thinking about that. It's bad for my heart.

"You okay?"(Renji)

"Just tired."(Mururu)

[..... What are you two, peas in a pod?]

"Really?"(Mururu)

"We aren't that similar."(Renji)

Having run out of things to talk to, we both silently just stared at the hole.

After fighting so hard, almost dying, yet not giving up..... In the end, Aya just ended it all with a surprise attack out of nowhere.

I've always thought about it, somehow I feel like I always end up in such a situation.

Even after fighting so hard, the best portion/role is taken away by Souichi or Aya, or my other comrades. No, well, I'm satisfied as long as I survive though.

While I'm thinking of this, Mururu, who was sitting beside me, looked towards me.

“Was I good?”(Mururu)

“Yeah, you were great. Well done.”(Renji)

I lightly patted her head in the same way I used to do Aya and the others back then.

Her smooth and silky hair felt nice.

[What are you doing?]

“Praising her.”(Renji)

[Why?]

“Just felt like it.”

While spent time like that, I heard voices coming from the new hole.

After waiting for a while, finally a slender arm reached out. Mururu went on guard but, I recognised that hand. When I held it and pulled, I saw a familiar face. After seeing that face, I finally, from the bottom of my heart, felt really. Her soft and gentle arm was really girlish. On pulling her out of the hole, she was completely covered in dirt. Not just her clothes, her hair and face as well. And above all, her clothes were sticking to her body very closely. But Ms Francesca has an amazing body, so frankly speaking, it was a very tempting view.

“So you’re safe, Ms Francesca?”(Renji)

Averting my gaze from her dirty, yet alluring figure, I asked her so.

“Ah, Renji-sama!”

“You really should stop with the ‘-sama’ already.”

After pulling Ms Francesca, next, Feirona appeared from the hole. He was the same as Ms Francesca, completely covered in dirt and soil. His clothes were wet as well. Did they fall into some underground water body or something?

“What’s happening?”(Renji)

“Aya-dono is pushing us up with her magic.”

“I see.”

So Aya used flight magic on these two to bring them out of the hole. She really is skilful. Neither of them had any visible wounds either. There just covered in mud. It’s amazing how she was able to make both of them come out of the hole uninjured without hitting any rocks even once when she probably doesn’t even have any source of light underground.

Last one should be Aya herself. As I pulled Feirona out as well, he uses hands to wipe away the dirt from his hair and clothes. He looks good

even while doing something like that. Though, he failed it actually moving the dirt.

"We were worried because you suddenly disappeared, you know."(Renji)

"We got attacked by monsters. And above all, the ground rumbled below us just when we were stuck."(Elf)

"so it seems. It's quite a big hole."

As I said that while recalling the hole at the campground, Ms Francesca became pale faced.

Well, the fact that you survive even after falling from such a hole, I would say that you guys are really lucky.

"And there was a huge army of slimes underground as well. It was great that Aya-sama was with us."(Francesca)

"…… Slimes."

[……. Slimes, eh.]

Both Mururu and Ermenhilde muttered at the same time.

Slimes. Unicellular organisms with jellylike soft bodies. Physical attacks don't affect them much. They are like natural enemies to me and Mururu.

It seems Mururu was also aware of that fact has she muttered the name in an annoyed voice.

I as well, do not have good memories regarding slimes either.

Even though it's the lowest class of monster in games, its actually pretty troublesome in the real-life.

Swords and spears to not work but flaming torches or magic attacks are effective. It's body fluids have various effects ranging from poisoning or paralysing enemy to dissolving the armour worn and lowering the person's defence. Due to that, I can't even count how many times I saw hell. Especially, due to the women in our group.

As I recalled the various tragedies brought upon me by slimes, Feirona's sight turned towards my right arm.

"It seems you guys had your own fair share of trouble as well."

He said that as he looked at my wounds. As if finally seeing my condition, Ms Francesca gasped as she hid her mouth with her hand.

"Yeah, I came close to dying. I only survived thanks to Mururu."

"Un."

Mururu puffed her chest with pride. It was so charming that all three of us started laughing.

Finally, the slender arm appeared from the hole.

“yokkoi, sho!” (T/N: I don’t know how to translate this. It’s basically like a grunting sound or ‘heave-ho’ you do when you do something that strains your body.)

I really don’t think a young girl should be speaking like that.

Aya, who appeared from the hole, was the same as the other two, covered in mud and dirt. The dirt must have stuck due to the liquids from the slimes.

Normally she always looks dignified and has an adult like beauty but her current face was very childish.

“Yo.”(renji)

“……..Eh?”(aya)

“That’s quite the face you have there.”

When I said that, she silently began going back into the hole. She sure is fast, I ended up giving a tsukkomi inside my head. Are you a mole?

“C’mon, come out already. We need to prepare for camp as well.”(renji)

I grabbed her wrist and pulled her out. Without resisting much, Aya came out easily. The reason she felt so light must be because I properly used the edge of the hole as a scaffold and actually used some strength. She came out so easily, it was a bit anticlimactic.

Since it's her, she must have not wanted to be seen covered in dirt so I was sure she would resist. Just l8ike how she looks like an adult, she also despises to be seen when she's weak.

She doesn't want to be always seem like a perfect being but she tries to always show her stronger side, I think.

"You alright?"(renji)

"I'm—-wait, Renji-san, you're injured!?"(aya)

"Yeah. Mururu as well."

Aya started touching my wound without any restraint making it hurt more. I had already done some basic emergency treatment so the wound had already bled so much that the cloth wrapped around it was dyed in red. The wound is not that big but it bled quite a lot. While I was thinking that, suddenly, my legs lost all strength. Huh, without understanding what happened, I fell on my backside.

[Renji?]

Ermenhilde's voice seemed distant. And her voice wasn't worried over the fact that I had fallen but was confused because it didn't understand

why I suddenly fell.

Even I, myself, am not sure why this is happening. Just when I was thinking that, this time, my whole body lost strength.

After defeating the skeleton, meeting up with my comrades, I must have relaxed myself too much. How pathetic. To faint from just that much.

I tried apologising but only my lips moved without releasing any sound.

After moving my lips uselessly a few times, even doing that felt annoying.

I closed my eyes.

The world went completely dark.

—-Someone was shaking me. That voice was reverberating like an echo but I can’t make out what it means.

I’m tired.

That’s why, I let go of my consciousness.

Chapter 33 Yamada-kun and Utano-san

Who was it that was crying?

Due to the major portions of the castle, that was probably carved out from a rock-face, having been destroyed, the ceiling had disappeared and the sky was visible. The sky was a brilliant azure and the sun shined at its brightest. Along with the beautiful wind, it should have made one feel pleasant but it only made me feel more irritated right now.

The sound of swords clashing, magic exploding, the terrain in the surroundings getting destroyed, the cries of those fucking monsters, the desperate voices of my comrades, and the voice right beside me that was calling me——all of them felt irritating.

I won't be able to hear it, like this.

Her last words.

The voice of _____, who was disappearing right inside my embrace.

"Sorry."

When I said that, the girl in my arms laughed as if troubled. Even though red blood was flowing out of her body due to getting slashed by the dark Demon God. But even so, she laughed. So that her last expression was neither crying nor a pained one——but one that was

smiling.

It was so painful to look at her like this that I put more strength in my arms holding her.

But even so, as if my comrade beside me couldn't see her in my arms, they shook my shoulders. Called my name in a loud voice.

"Even though I said I'd protect you. Even though——I promised you."

Once again, the girl laughed. This time, with a smile, she shook her head.

Her golden hair swayed, and her jade-green coloured eyes became softer. That expression that she'd show occasionally was so beautiful that if it was not for the fact that she was bleeding out right in my arms, one would have completely fallen in love with her.

But even the red blood, the source of life, only made her look more beautiful.

As I gently caressed her cheek, her lips moved slightly. But I heard no words. Only, her lips moved.

Aah, why am I always like this? Unable to protect those who I really want to. Always getting protected by others, the weakest Hero. A failure who can't utilise his own power properly. Why? Why? Why? —— Why did I ask for this kind of power? If it was going to be this saddening, if it was going to be this painful.....

“____”

In memories, a noise disrupted her words. I can’t recall it. Her last words.

An immense magic shook the world. The slash from the Brave and the Demonic Sword user, the breath from the Ancient Dragon, the attack from the Demon Lord; turned the castle of the Demon God into rubble.

Everyone is fighting hard, working together. They are trying to defeat the enemy of the world. Even then I, the one who holds the weapon to defeat that enemy held not the weapon but her instead.

I held her small, soft, blood-stained, warm hand. Even though this wasn’t the first time I did so, it felt like it was.

It felt as if it was not ____’s hand anymore, and as if to not forget that sensation, I put it near my cheek.

“You’ll get dirty.”

“Like I care. It’s your blood.”

“……..As usual, you’re such a fool.”

Yeah, that’s right. I’m a fool. An utter fool. An idiot who can’t protect anything he wants to. And even then, I still wish to protect her……..a

hopeless, irredeemable fool.

And she said _____ to me. Because I was like this, she said _____ to me. That's why I swore that I won't change the way I live.

Before my comrades, before the world, before the Demon God, I chose this girl in front of me.

And, that girl looked at me with a smile.

"Don't cry."

At her voice, I finally realized who was crying.

It was me. I was the one who was crying.

"…….Don't cry, idiot."

Even though she's about to die, _____'s voice was gentle and warm as always. Her hand holding me started losing strength so I put more strength in my hand and held her even more tightly. Even though I'm holding her so tight that it should be painful, let alone cry in pain, _____ didn't even show a change in her expression.

She simply, kept on looking at me with a smile.

"I, rather than your crying face……like your smiling face more."

She laughed. With a smile, the smile I loved, she told that to me.

Till the very end, with a smile. With a dazzling, almost painful to watch, smile.

“That’s why, don’t cry.”

That’s why, I made a promise.

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When I opened my eyes, a familiar ceiling entered my view. A magnificent chandelier hung on the wooden ceiling. Moving my head to look to the side, very expensive, thick curtains hung over the glass windows.

A fire seemed to be burning in the fireplace as the room was perfectly warm. Judging by the water drops forming on the window, it should be

pretty cold outside.

Looking back towards the ceiling again, I gave a sigh.

“Ermenhilde?”

I called but there was no answer. It wasn’t by my side it seems making me sigh again.

I am pretty certain that I know where I am right now. This place——this room is the one that had been allotted to me. After being summoned here, I resided in this room while I learnt more about this world. Whether it be the alignment of the furniture or the view from the window, both felt nostalgic. As the tension in my body left, I relaxed into my bed again.

But, I can’t understand how I’m here. After the battle in that forest…… whatever happened to that shitty Skeleton?

“____”

When I tried to get up, a pain ran through my right arm. On looking I realized that it had been bandaged. Oh right, I had taken quite a lot of damage from that skeleton.

After that, after meeting up with Aya and others——I have not a single bit of memory. I must have stayed fainted for the whole time. I recalled that my condition headed towards the worse after getting my right arm damaged. I must have been poisoned back then as well. It must be due to that poison that my body feels so sluggish. Even moving a little feels

like a pain.

While confirming the condition of my body, I felt amazed that I actually survived after all that. Let alone Ms Francesca, even Aya or Feirona cannot use detoxifying magic. Apparently you cannot detoxify a poison if you don't understand its composition perfectly. No matter how much of a genius magician Aya is, she's still only 18. On top of that, in a world like this where science is very lacking in progress, there's no way they could learn about poisons and its composition. A poison from a descendant of the Demon God wouldn't have any antidote easily available either. Obviously, unlike games, this world doesn't have a single antidote for all kinds of poisoning.

Thus, only Yayoi-chan and one more has the ability in this whole world to nullify the Demon God's poison. If this really is the Imnesia Royal Castle as I think it is, then I must have been cured by the Witch of the Capital.

"*yawn*.."

While I kept thinking of such things, I ended up yawning while feeling sleepy. Is body still tired or have I simply overslept and still want to sleep? I don't even know the current situation but since I wasn't woken up means that it must not be an emergency. While I tried to keep my consciousness as I felt more sleepy, finally I realized that someone else was also in the room.

That certain black haired person was currently sleeping while sitting on a chair and using her hand on the table in front of her as a pillow. I could easily recognise that face.

“Oi, Aya.”

I called out but there was no response. She must be in deep sleep. Sleeping in that pose is gonna make her body hurt all over later though, I think.

After trying to call her a few more times, I gave up on waking her. Well, the room is warm, she won’t catch a cold at least. Though I feel like I’ll get scolded for looking at her sleeping face later though. Well, I’ll deal with that when it comes. Since I had nothing else to look at, I decided to observe her sleeping face. Since she’s always acting uptight and dignified, such moments are precious. I’ll tease her later.

Her eyelids and her small shoulders moved as she breathed. Her expression was also gentler suitable of her age. Her usual expression also suits her but her current expression had a charm of its own. She’s called an honour student back at the academy but I wonder if she sleeps through her classes or not. I wonder how many boys have seen her face like this.

But soon I got bored of that as well and I once again started looking outside the window. How should I say this, I am too used to seeing her sleep like this. After all she always slept before me when we were journeying.

Since it still hurts to move my body, I’ll have to just laze around like this.

“……”

Royal capital Imnesia. Located at the centre of the continent, it's the largest city. With the 4 great cities in every direction, this is the capital where the king lives.

From the forest of rotting souls, where my memories ended, it should have still taken 5 days even with horses to get here. It's really amazing I survived that long of a journey while being poisoned.

Suddenly, the door was knocked. Without waiting for a reply, the door was opened and a familiar woman's face peeked in.

"Ah, so you're awake."

As if she was here just to chat, she spoke. I'm an injured guy here who had fainted due to my wounds you know. Well, if I were to say that, it will not end well for me, in fact I'll probably get scolded for making Aya and the others worry or something like that.

Somehow, I can never win with words against her. I have lost so many times that I have become consciously aware of that fact that I'll lose an argument.

While playing with her flaxen hair drooping from her shoulders, she slowly closed the door back. To make sure that Aya didn't wake up, I didn't even hear a small sound. She really is skilled.

She wore a magician like robe and a had glasses, that were rare in this world. Her slightly reddish eyes that showed her strong will looked directly at me without wavering. I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who

thinks that her gaze is scary. As she walked over the carpet without making even a single sound, she really did give off the feeling of a Witch seen in legends and fables. Though, once again, I was perfectly aware of what was waiting for me if I said that out loud.

Since it'd be weird to stay lying down like this, I tried to get up when her gaze seemed to have become slightly warmer. Was she worried about me?

Probably, I think. Her gaze and presence was scary but I know that this woman isn't really that cold. She must have been worried about me, I think. But well, the fact that she's here means that my deductions weren't wrong. I ended up sighing again.

"So we really are at the Imnesia Castle?"(renji)

"Yes. You were brought in with incredible wounds, Yamada-kun."

While saying that, the Witch of the capital slightly caressed the sleeping Aya's hair.

——Utano-san.

Utano-san's finger must have felt nice since Aya's sleeping expression felt even gentler. They looked so much like a family that I felt pleasant as well. And, though it was easy to understand, Aya did have affection for Utano-san like she was her mother. Whenever she had trouble she'd go to Utano-san as well. I think she does so even now. I felt a bit jealous of their relationship to be honest.

Having realized my gaze, Utano-san looked at me with a teasing gaze.

“If you look at a girl’s sleeping face so seriously, you’ll be treated as a pervert you know?”

“How rude. I wasn’t looking that seriously.”

“fufu. No matter what Yamada-kun is thinking, this girl wouldn’t really mind it though.”

As she kept on caressing Aya’s hair, her hand then reached Aya’s cheek. As if it tickled, Aya shrunk back from it. It was as if she was a cat.

“After all, her special person saw her sleeping face. That’s very important you know.”(utano0

“……”

I could only avert my gaze from Utano-san who said that.

I could also predict what she’d say next. That’s why I simply decided to look out of the window instead. Ahh, where the hell is Ermenhilde?

“Treasure them properly.”(utano)

“I do. In my own way, that is.”

Her gaze cold and sharp and turned towards me. But still, I can't help it.

It's very vague what Aya and I want from each other. If I tried to change that, I would only fail. Probably.

"It seems even after a year, your incompetence hasn't changed at all."(utano)

"……..so harsh. I'm not trying to be incompetent you know?"

"If it was me, I'd take a more straight approach."

"Well, that's how you always are after all."

I'm, unlike you, not strong enough to believe in myself. Aya is……I don't know how she thinks.

Taking a straight approach and then magnificently failing, it's not a laughing matter at all. Well, that's no more than an excuse. In fact, it's exactly how Utano-san said that I was incompetent. I know Aya's feelings towards me. But, I'm still avoiding it.

If Aya doesn't know what she seeks from me, then we simply have to look for it together. She's still 18yrs old, she was just a 16 yrd old child when she developed those feelings. It's wrong to ask for an answer to such a thing from a child like her. But still, I did so. And I'm getting spoiled by her. Even though my answer……..had already appeared an year

ago.

“She was crying after you fainted you know?”(utano)

“I see.”

“To make a girl cry. You’re the worst.”

“I know.”

When I shrugged my shoulders, she gave a sigh.

Am I the worst because I’m simply weak or because I still haven’t accepted Aya? It’s probably both. Yeah, I’m definitely incompetent. Taking a damage from a different person than the usual Ermenhilde, I hung my head in shame.

“And, I as well———“(utano)

“Hm?”

Her next words were in such a small voice that I couldn’t hear it clearly.

I looked at her so that she could repeat it but she simply looked at me with the cold eyes of the great Witch.

“So I heard you rampaged in the forest of rotting souls?”(utano)

“No, I simply ran all over the place from monsters. It was Aya who dealt the finishing blow.”

“What’s that? That’s completely different from what I heard.”

Apparently she wasn’t going to repeat what she had said before so I simply decided to answer her next question.

When I did, she laughed while hiding her mouth. That gesture was very womanly, in a completely different sense from Aya or Miss Francesca. She loses to both of them in the chest department but she’s definitely an adult.

“It’s the truth though.”(renji)

“It may be to you but it seemed different to Aya though. Well, people do glorify every action of the person they like after all.”

“in the first place, Aya wasn’t even there though.”

I recalled that shitty skeleton. Aya wasn’t there but it was definitely Aya who killed it. The high output bombardment that she fired from underground had blown half of that demon away.

Seeing an attack like that really makes me realize how weak I really am once again. She’s intelligent, beautiful, and has a good personality as well. The only thing I surpass Aya in is age. What a pitiful thing it is.

“Then, all the more so. To this child, you are that special.”(utano)

“That’s troublesome in its own way though. I’m not a special person after all.”

While we talked in low voice so as to not wake AYa up, we looked at her sleeping face again.

“So, why am I here?”(renji)

“You don’t remember?”

“Unfortunately, I have no memories after fighting the demon in the forest.”

“My oh my. It seems you even missed Aya’s crying face.”

“To be honest I’m glad I didn’t see that though.”

If I saw something like that, I’ll be filled with a guilty conscience.

Crying faces are one thing——I really don’t want to see. It’s fine if they are tears of happiness though. But if I don’t want to see tears of sadness……at all.

“I’m a crybaby as well after all. If I see someone crying, I’ll start to tear

up as well.”(renji)

“That’s true.”

Enough of that, I averted my face to run from her gaze. Why is it that only at such times she shows a gentle expression? I really am not good with dealing with Utano-san. She’s fun to talk to but I feel as if she can see through my inner thoughts sometimes.

“Yui carried you all the way here from the forest.”(utano)

“Yui-chan did?”

I ended up asking again due to hearing a familiar name.

Yui-chan. Hiyuu Yui. One of the 13 summoned, the same as us. A girl that tames monsters. I didn’t know where she was currently but was she luckily near the forest?

“She was actually in the Elfreim continent but apparently Koutarou-kun brought her here. He had seen a future where you would die it seems. You should be sure to thank both of them.”(utano)

Where do I even start with this? I’m already surprised with Yui-chan and Koutarou’s names coming up and now you’re telling me that I was predicted to be dead?…….That bastard Koutarou, if he saw something like that, tell that to me directly!

Well, I'm also at fault since I was hiding where I was living I guess.

Why is it that everytime he sees me in a future, I'm about to die? Am I that weak? I do consider myself to be stronger than the normal adventurers of this world but is that also wrong? I really feel like crying now.

Seeing me like that, Utano-san started laughing again. Aya kept on sleeping as usual though.

"Yui-chan and Koutarou……are you trying to gather everyone up in the capital?"(renji)

"Well, now. The event is close but I have no intention of doing that."

Saying that 'she' has no intention to do so means that someone else is planning to do so from the dark.

For example, the person who created this world, or maybe it's just some absurd fate working. Well, that person is not a human but a goddess though. I hope that my intuition telling me that another problem is coming is really wrong. Everything that she brings up is in a different level of trouble. On top of that, it's always concerned with me somehow. Am I the only one who thinks that she's just messing around with me now?

As if she had read my thoughts, Utano-san also gave an amused smile.

"Work hard."(utano)

“I refuse. I worked hard enough for my whole life on that day an year ago.”

“That’s irrelevant. She’s a goddess, and it’s always your duty to take her requests.”

What kind of logic is that?! That’s messed up. I have to deal with that woman for my whole life?

Ignoring me who dropped his shoulders in dissapointment, Utano-san stood up.

“But certainly, it seems everyone is gathering together. It’s as if some kind of fate is working at it.”(utano)

“Oh please no. The Demon God is dead. The most troublesome thing is gone……..i just don’t want anymore fighting.”

“I agree. I have a lot of things I have to do in this country.”

Her tone, was even deeper than before when she said those last words. She must be feeling depressed while thinking about all the work she has.

It doesn’t show much on her expression usually but, only at times like these she’s easy to understand.

“…….you seem to be working hard as well, with all sorts of things.”(renji)

“Yes, all thanks to a certain someone quickly disappearing out of nowhere.”

I decided to ignore that and look at Aya’s sleeping face instead.

I really do feel sorry about it. For running away from all the trouble, from Aya and for hiding myself my other comrades……and to have left everything to Utano-san.

But even then, Utano-san never seriously blamed me for anything and still talk to me like back then. I wonder if this woman knows how happy that makes me. Even though I’d be in no position to refute her no matter what she says to me.

“fufu, for the time being, first heal your wounds. It’s safe here after all.”(utano)

“Oh please, can’t I at least move to an inn in the town instead?”

If I were to stay here, I’ll start meeting all sorts of people that know me. How will I even face them after hiding from them for one whole year?

Even while knowing that, Utano-san’s gaze was cold. Extremely cold——an Absolute zero level gaze was sent towards me.

“That’s impossible. Everyone already knows that you’re here.”(utano)

“—-Wha?!”

“Eru is the insurance. Without her, you won’t slip out of the castle either. Am I right?”

I looked at Utano-san blackly.

And she looked at me with a smile of a child that just succeeded in her prank. Though it was rare expression from her, I could only feel chills from it.

“Utano-san, may I ask an abrupt question?”

“What is it, Yamada-kun?”

“I, how long was I……asleep I wonder?” (T/N: it’s difficult in english but basically Renji is talking in a very polite manner to her.)

“Today would be the fifth day, so basically around 100 hours I guess?”

I covered my face with my left hand. No wonder my body feels so sluggish. I must have been rushed to the capital but I didn’t think I had been asleep for so long.

“Aya’s here so what about them…….Feirona and the others?”(renji)

“I met them. A noble daughter, an elf, and a beast woman. You’re once

again travelling with very interesting people, eh?"

"So they were safe. That's good……"

That's a relief. I did think that they'd be safe considering Aya's here but even I would get worried seeing it's been 5 days already.

They're probably not in the castle so they must be in the town, resting in an inn. If I am able to slip out later, I should go meet them. Well, first I'll have to find which inn they're staying inn though.

"You can be relieved. I'll send a messenger by tomorrow and invite them to the castle later."(utano)

"Ah, I see."

She really can read minds, right? Or am I simply that easy to read? I hope it's the former.

"But even still, you've brought something troublesome again with you."(utano)

"Hm?"

From her pocket, she brought out a black crystal. I have no memory of this but I doubt its something good. Not to mention colour—-it made me recall that goddamn fucking monster. Probably because I dreamt of the past just now, I felt even worse than before. From just the looks, it looks

like a pretty crystal ore that hasn't been shaped yet.

"And what's that?"(renji)

"It's what the beast woman called Mururu brought from the Elfreim continent."

"……Mururu did?"

Or rather, so she's from the Elfreim continent. How did she manage to get a ship needed to cross over to this continent? Especially how she didn't even know how money worked.

Well, I should ask that the next time we meet. I can't find an answer like this.

"Then, that's the content of the request from the Spirit God?"(renji)

"Oh my. You didn't know that?"

"Because she refused to show it to anyone but Utano-san. And I felt that it'd be better to open it with you as well."

Though in truth, I just wanted to avoid any responsibility. But let's not tell her that. Honesty may be a virtue but too much of honesty is just foolish.

“So, what is it?”(renji)

“A fragment of the Demon God’s heart.”

Ah, so that’s why I felt so sick suddenly. Even after hearing that, I didn’t feel disturbed in the slightest. In fact, I feel more satisfied. If Ermenhilde was with me, I would have smashed it to pieces. Utano-san said that she took Ermenhilde so that I don’t run away but probably this was the main reason. To have thought so far, so annoying.

“Is the Demon God reviving?”(renji)

“No, we won’t let it.”

I recalled what that demon said back at the Magic CIty.

But Utano-san denied it strongly. It really encouraged me as well.

“That’s the reason why we exist here, Yamada-kun.”

Away from the window, she said that while sitting at the side of the bed. Her reddish black eyes looked at me from an even closer distance than before.

Too close, or am I the only one who is thinking that.

“Aya still hasn’t woken up?”(renji)

Averting my gaze, I looked at Aya.

No matter how much we talked she showed no signs of waking up.

“Yes, I made her sleep with magic after all.”(utano)

“Wha——-”

‘What are you saying?’ Before I could say that, my lips were blocked. With soft lips of a woman’s.

It was just a peck, like a child’s kiss. That too, only lasted an instant before she moved away. But even then, it was sweet and smelled nice.

When I opened my eyes, that I had closed who knows when, my gaze met Utano-san’s slightly moist gaze. That also only lasted an instant. She quickly stood back up again and quickly moved towards the door. She must be embarrassed. Even though she’s usually assertive, in the end, her heart is still that of an innocent child’s. It seems that hasn’t changed either.

“Then, I’ll leave you take care of Aya, Yamada-kun.”

She snapped her fingers.

When she did, as if nothing had happened, Aya lifted up her sleepy body. Since she was sleeping on the table, she stretched her body while

sitting with sleepy eyes.

“Good Morning, Aya.”(utano)

“Eh, ah—-Yuu…..”

At that, she finally realized that I was awake and her body hardened up. Her expression changed into various ones, one by one. I can never get bored of this no matter how many times I see it. Now if I were to say that I saw your sleeping face right now, I wonder what kind of face she’d make?

“I’ll go prepare a meal, you’re hungry right?”(utano)

And the woman who left only problems behind her left the room after saying just that.

Chapter 34 Reunion (1)

“Renji-san, are you fine now?”(aya)

“Hm, yeah. My body hurts a bit due to sleeping too much though.”

According to Utano-san, I slept for full 5 days. It’s been a long time since I slept for so long continuously. I guess even I’ll get tired after walking continuously till the Forest of Rotting souls and then fighting a Demon God’s descendant. Well, I’m already very lucky to have survived all that to be honest.

“Also, I’m hungry.”(renji)

“fufu. Even though you almost died, you’re already energetic eh?”(aya)

“Cause I didn’t die in the end.”

When I said that, Aya laughed amusingly. Seeing her smile, I also started laughing with her.

“Did I make you worry?”(renji)

“Yes, very much so. Francesca-senpai and the others were very worried as well.”

“I see.”

Aya brought a chair and sat down near my bed. The way she sat was, in a sense, in an even more dignified manner than Utano-san. I won't say that out loud though. Even walls have ears after all.

Aya's tone was a bit angry, but her expression was so gentle that I didn't feel scared at all. I wonder if she herself knows that? I doubt she does.

"To fall asleep in my room, you really must have been worried a lot, I guess."(renji)

"…….mouu, please forget that."

Blushing a little, she glared at me. Normally it would be scary but right now, it only feels cute. When I kept on staring at her face, she ended up averting her face.

"It would be such a waste to forget that."(renji)

"There's no such thing!"

When she spoke angrily and I shrugged my shoulders at it, my right arm pained again slightly. No, the wound has healed but, a little of the Demon God's poison is still remaining probably.

"Are you really okay?"(aya)

“As long as Aya doesn’t shout at me, yeah.”

“uu..”

When I gave a stifled laughter, Aya curled up her body. It’s because you act like that, I feel like teasing you more you know? Due to the gap between this and the way she acts normally, well, my teasing nature gets awakened.

Even I myself think that its very childish of me to do so. Like, what the hell am I doing? But, oh well, I guess it would be imprudent to continue any further right now .

If I am to tease someone who was worried for me, I should at least wait till I’m back to full health again. Even I have tended to my injured comrades countless times. At those times, its best to always be energetic, I know.

“You’re always teasing me.”(aya)

“Because I get really amusing reactions when I do so.”

“Haah……you’re treating me as a child.”

“Because you still are a child.”

“I’m already 18 yrs old.”

“And I’m 28.”

When I said that, she pouted like a child to protest against me. That’s exactly why you’re still a child. But if I pointed that out, she’ll fix her expression which would be a waste so I didn’t.

We continued conversing like that when,

“Oh right, where’s Ermenhilde?”

“……Eru is probably with Yui or that idiot, I think.”(aya)

When I changed the topic, she sighed.

Idiot—-probably means Koutarou. Aya and Koutarou don’t get along much. Well, they don’t hate each other or anything, they simply quarrel with each other too much. That’s because Aya uses magic by using her mind/thinking with her head whereas Koutarou weaves/creates magic with pure sense/intuition. One being a genius and one who depends on pure instinct, they simply are unable to understand each others magic. That’s why they end up quarrelling.

Even after countless times I have mediated their fights, they still haven’t stopped.

“It was Koutarou who came to save me because he saw a future of me dying you know?”

“No such thing.”

“When I tried to defend Koutarou, Aya pouted again.

“If he saw a future of Renji-san dying, he should have quickly told it to us. If he had, we would have taken Souichi and Yayoi with us as well.”(aya)

“That won’t do. Those two have their own things to do as well.”

To be honest, if it were upto me, I’d have Aya live as a student at Magic City as well but it’s useless to say that now.

“He’s always putting up airs, over exaggerating things……..that’s why I don’t like him.”(aya)

“Please try to get along with him more.”

“I’ll try to.”

Well, even I think that he should have told me such a future earlier though. He saw my death after all, my death! I don’t want to die yet, you know? I have lots of things I want to do, things I have to finish. There’s no way I’ll accept dying in that remote forest.

I’m pretty sure he has already disappeared but next time I meet him, I’m definitely going to complain about this. Also, I have to thank him for saving me as well. That chunnibyou wannabe is weak to such things after all. I’m gonna tease him to my heart’s content.

“Oh right, is Yui-chan also in the capital?”(renji)

“Yes. She was the one who carried you here from the forest on her Fafnir. She should be at the training grounds right now.”

Saying that, Aya stood up and opened the curtains. I also came closer to the window and looked outside. The training grounds were perfectly visible from this window. There a giant crimson dragon was currently resting its wings. It was Yui-chan’s third contracted beast, the Ancient Dragon–Fafnir. Just like an year ago, it always looked strong and cool. Every man admires dragons after all, yeah. We had the dragon lend us its back to move quickly to different places and also had the help from its breath attacks during battles countless times.

“Oh, there’s Fafnir…..so that means..”

Saying till that, a 15cm tall humanoid with wings came towards the window we were looking through—-a fairy. When I had asked sometime before if she didn’t feel cold flying around wearing just that white dress, apparently, the wind spirits took care of that for her. Truly convenient.

“_____, _____-”

Since I closed the window, I can’t hear what she’s saying but it seems she hasn’t realized that so is still continuing to talk. When I finally laughed at her, she finally realized and started beating on the window. She’s the same as well it seems.

“Don’t break the glass, will you?”(renji)

“How rude. Even though I came here to greet you, you laughed at me.”(fairy)

“It’s your fault to start talking even though the window was closed. You should have realized that earlier.”

“uu——well, that’s true as well.——”

Since she’s mumbling in a small voice I can’t hear her properly. Since her body was small, her volume was low as well.

“What did you say?”(renji)

“Shut up. Idiot! Die with your incompetence!”

“I am not gonna die that easily.”

And what the hell, she’s calling me the same thing as Utano-san. Even I’ll get hurt a bit now. I’m not that incompetent, probably. Even like this, I still try to live as bravely as possible.

“Anastasia, did you see Ermenhilde?”(renji)

“Wha? What, you prefer that medal woman over me?”

“What is wrong with your brain? I can’t calm down without Ermenhilde by my side that’s all.”

But she still looked at me with a suspicious gaze. Really, what goes on inside her head?

Fairy Anastasia. She’s the queen of all fairies that reside in the forest of the World Tree in Elfreim. She’s a user of Spirit magic and in terms of usability of magic, she even surpasses Aya in my opinion. Though I wonder if that’s simply because she’s a fairy or because this nagging chibikko(small kid/brat) is actually skilled on her own…….It’s probably the former.

I wonder what she was thinking right now after I asked about Ermenhilde since the Fairy queen flew away from the window and glided in the air. She’s really skilful. I recalled that I had tried flying using spirit magic many times myself but I couldn’t fly as well as Anastasia. And then I was made a fool of as well. I’ll ask her again and take revenge this time.

“fuun. You have it hard as well, Aya.”(fairy)

“Not really. This fun in its own you know.(aya)

“Yuuko as well, without him knowing……you’re such a sinful man, Renji”(fairy)

“In Utano-san’s case, I’m more of a victim in my opinion.”(renji)

“……”

But, for some reason, I ended up getting a cold glare from Aya instead. Even the presence beside me became colder.

“What did you do to Yuuko-san?”(aya)

“Why am I being treated as the wrong-doer!?”

To be looked so suspiciously by Aya……I’m so sad. But in truth, earlier, how should I call it, that was a surprise attack by her. In any case, I am not at fault in anyway I think. Or maybe I am at fault for not being clear even now?

Well, I guess its always the man who’s at fault in such cases. Yeah.

“It comes to him as a habit, doesn’t it?”(fairy)

“Shut up, chibikko.”

“nuu. You’re calling me like that again, you incompetent!.”

Saying that, she climbed on my right shoulder. The weight I felt made me nostalgic and I ended up smiling a little.

“Where’s Yui-chan?”(renji)

“With Faf’. ‘Knight’ is swinging swords with Yuuta.”(fairy)

“With Kuuki eh——-”

I’ll have to go meet him as well. Kuuki Yuuta. The [Knight of the Goddess], one of the heroes affiliated with the Knights Order of the country. And ‘Knight’ was the first contracted monster of Yui-chan, a Phantom Knight. He’s called ‘Knight’ because he’s a knight. Utano-san was the one who named him. Don’t try to think too much about it. It’s useless to make a retort.

But still, I sure hear a lot of my comrades names just by coming to the capital. That made me feel——very weird kinds of unclear emotions, making me scratch my head.

“You’ll catch a cold so I’ll close the window again, okay?”(aya)

“Yeah.”

“My oh my. What devotion! You’ll definitely become a good wife, Aya.”(fairy)

“————!”

When Anastasia teased her like that, she silently, but instantly tried to grab the fairy. Aya really has a low boiling point in front of her comrades it seems.

It wasn’t her aim, but since Anastasia was on my shoulder, it ended up

with her jumping at me. Normally I'd just hold her back easily but I really didn't have any strength on me right now. I tried but my legs soon gave up as I fell. I also felt the actual culprit move away from my shoulder as well.

"Oh!"

"EH!?"

Just like that, I fell down along with Aya. I fell with my back towards the bed and Aya fell right in my arms. Depending on how you look, it would seem as if I was passionately hugging Aya I guess.

"Oho."(fairy)

"Don't tease her too much. Even after all the teasing, she still hasn't gotten used to it after all."(renji)

"I know."(fairy)

Why was she giving me thumbs up, this idiot fairy queen.

"You okay?"(renji)

I called to the girl in my arms but I got no response. When I bent my neck below to see her, only her glossy black hair came into my view. She must be putting a lot of time in grooming her hair. It even smelled really nice as well. But as you'd expect, I won't harbour wicked thoughts for a

girl who feels more like a daughter.

“Aya?”(renji)

“……”

When I spoke, as gently as I could, she put her hand on my chest. She held my shirt, and gripped it very tightly.

As I wondered about what emotions were running through her——I looked above to see the culprit behind this situation, the fairy queen flying around the room grinning while looking at us. How can one be so carefree? As expected of prank-loving fairies I guess? And she’s their queen to top it off.

Giving a sigh, I released strength from my body. After 5 days of only sleeping, I lack all energy.

“C’mon, don’t cry. I’m still alive right?”(renji)

Her shoulders were slightly trembling.

But I could only caressed her head gently while combing through her hair. I was the one who made her worry and afraid. She said it lightly but she must have been really worried when I was unconscious. I can understand. I was also always anxious and worried whenever I was looking after an injured comrade. I know what she’s feeling all too well.

And I also know that you alone cannot deal with those emotions. So all I could do was caress her head to calm her. Just like back then……just like 'her' who held me tightly and caressed me.

"You're a crybaby as usual."(fairy)

"More than 50% is your fault here, you know?"(renji)

"I wonder?"

Saying that, as if she had read my mind, she looked at me. Well, I know. The one who's at fault the most is me who almost died. It's me who made them all worry so much. That's why I could only try and comfort Aya. Even though I haven't done anything for this girl. Even though I haven't even answered back to her feelings. But even so, I end up accepting Aya like this. This, definitely is my fault. I know that.

After caressing her head for a little while, Aya's shoulders started to tremble lesser and lesser. Utano-san did say that 'take care of Aya' but, I guess, she expected even this to happen. While I was thinking of that, one of the culprits(Anastasia) hit my head. Since she's small it doesn't hurt but it did surprise me.

"That was a minus."(fairy)

"……What was?"*(renji)

"You shouldn't think of other women while embracing a girl!"

Can read minds as well? I ended up retorting like that.

“I wasn’t really, though.”(renji)

“Should I tell about this to Eru and Yuuko later then?”

“Fine, fine.”

Maybe she didn’t like my answer, she hit my head again. It was a fist this time. Well, that doesn’t really hurt either though.

“Even though you abandoned us for a whole year; how about showing some gratitude towards me who let you off the hook with just this much?”(fairy)

“Yeah, yeah.”

“……..Seriously. you’re such a tsundere.”

“That usage is definitely, without a doubt, wrong!”

There’s no ‘tsun’ in me. In the first place, a male tsundere just sounds creepy.

(T/N: If you don’t know what a tsundere is, tho it’s pretty much impossible if you’re reading LNs and WNs and still don’t know that, but

even so if you don't, just google it. I'm pretty sure you'll get wiki pages explaining in detail what a tsundere is :P)

"Ermenhilde also uses such weird words at times but who the hell is teaching you guys all this stuff?"(renji)

"Koutarou, obviously?"

That idiot, I'm definitely going to make him cry later. Though I do have to thank him for saving me, that's a different thing altogether.

Deciding that in my heart, I lifted Aya from her shoulders and sat down on the bed with her. It ended up with her technically sitting on my lap but Aya didn't seem to have any complaints about that. To be honest, I'd be happier if she'd move already. As usual, she rested her head on my chest. She smells temptingly nice, really.

"A….Aya?"(renji)

"What is it?"

It would seem that she had cried out completely already as her voice was back to normal. I gave a sigh of relief at that.

"Please get down off me already."(renji)

"It's amazing you could even say that. I'm actually impressed."(fairy)

I ignored the fairy speaking from above for now. Or rather, at least half of this is your fault, this situation.

But seriously, how did it end up like this? I ended up giving a wry smile. I was the one at fault. No matter how I try to gloss over it, the fact doesn't change that my weakness made them worry so much.

"I really made you worry, didn't I?"(renji)

"Very much so."(aya)

"I see."

The same conversation we just a while ago. But this time, Aya was crying. But for some reason, I don't feel that bad inside. There's no way I would when it was a beauty who was worried for me and crying over me.

I see. I whispered that once again and looked towards Anastasia.

"I made you worried as well?"(renji)

"Yes, very much. I was incredibly, worried for you."

"As usual you exaggerate everything, don't you?"

"As usual your treatment of me is different from others as well, isn't it!?"

“This much is more than enough for you.”

As I talked with Anastasia, Aya, in my embrace, trembled her shoulders. But this time I didn’t hear her sobbing but heard her stiffled laughter.

“Thank you. For crying for me.”(renji)

“——Yes.”

From within my embrace, Aya smoothly slipped out. Even though she had been crying till now, she was surprisingly nimble with her feet.

In exchange, Anastasia came back to sit on my right shoulder.

“If Renji-san won’t cry, I’ll cry for you as well.”(aya)

“I see.”

“…….That’s why, if you even slightly think that that is not good, please don’t make me cry anymore.”

With reddened eyes, but with a smile, she said that to me.

“Was that a confession?”(fairy)

“Well, I wonder?”(renji)

“Something like that?”(aya)

As we both answered at the same time, all 3 of us started laughing.

Were both the correct answer? Or were they both wrong?

As we talked about things that I wasn’t sure even held any meaning, the door was knocked.

“I brought food, Yamada-kun.”

Utano-san came in. In both of her hands were trays with different food arranged.

How the hell did she even knock the door then?

“Oh? Anastasia, you were here as well?”(yuuko)

“Yes! Yuuko, where’s my portion?”9fairy)

“I’ll share mine with you.”

“This why I love you, Yuuko!”

To get lured in by food, she sure is selfish. As expected of a fairy, I

guess.

As my right shoulder became lighter, I gave a sigh. As my gaze connected with Aya's, we both gave a smile.

"Did you have him spoil you well?"(yuuko)

"_____"

Instantly, Aya's face turned red. She hid her face but even she was red to nape of her neck and the tip of her ears.

As usual, she's weak to unexpected things.

"Now then, let's eat shall we?"(renji)

At times like these, it's best to act as if I didn't notice and wait for the storm to pass. I don't think that's a mistake either. Seeing me like that, Utano-san looked at me for a second and gave a sigh.

"Don't you know? Every time you sigh, you let your happiness run away apparently."(renji)

"It's fine. I've already found/caught my happiness."(utano)

So it seems.

Chapter 35 Reunion (2)

After finishing the late lunch, having nothing else better to do, I simply leaned back on the chair doing nothing.

I stared at the ceiling but it's not like there was anything worth watching there either. Now then, what should I do next?

"Now then, I'll clear up the tableware and return in a moment, 'kay?"(utano)

I looked towards Utano-san who rose from her chair as she said that. She had her usual serious-looking face that I was well acquainted with.

"I could at least help with that……"(renji)

"Injured should just rest. Don't worry, I'll make you work enough to pay back for this later."

That sounds unpleasant on its own though. Any job from her sounds troublesome, or should I say, a total pain. As if she had read through my thoughts, Aya sitting beside me gave a short laugh.

"I have a bad feeling about this, really."(renji)

"How rude. Do you really think I'll give you a job solely to tease you, Yamada-kun?"(utano)

You would, definitely……I wonder what would happen if I actually said that?

While thinking of that, I moved my gaze away from Utano-san. I felt like her gaze became even colder but let's just ignore that. I feel like I'll be dragged even further down if I pointed that out.

"Let me help as well."(aya)

As if trying to help me, Aya also stood up and began gathering the plates on the tray. Utano-san's gaze moved towards Aya at that.

As I felt relieved inside my heart, Utano-san suddenly looked at me again. I panicked and ended up straightening up my back.

"Renji-san, please take a good rest now."(aya)

"Yeah———"

"I'll keep watch so its fine!"(fairy)

Just when I was about to reply to Aya, Anastasia gave a reply while standing near my ear. She had returned to my shoulder from Utano-san.

"……..heavy."(renji)

“Ahn?”

Even if you’re a fairy, it’s really weird for a girl to make such sounds. Near my ear, Anastasia spoke in a really low but cold voice. It’s not like the first time I’m hearing her speak like this; she speaks like this when she gets a bit angry.

“Wow, Anastasia is going to stay with me, I’m so happy..”(renji)

“Good, good. Show your gratitude with tears in your eyes Renji.”(fairy)

“Fufu.”

Was it Aya or Utano-san who laughed at that? That said, Anastasia’s mood still seemed to have not changed. Her voice is back to normal but she’s probably still a bit angry. Or rather, she’s definitely angry. As you’d expect of a woman—-well, I doubt she’s mentally grown enough to even be called a woman. I guess I shouldn’t have said that about her weight. It was only a joke though. Well, that excuse won’t work now though.

“Anastasia, you sure get along with Yamada-kun, don’t you?”(utano)

“Of course. But don’t worry, I don’t whip injured people so I won’t do anything like that.”

“Wait, if I hadn’t been injured were you going to whip me!?”(renji)

“That or, would have hung you down the window.”

That’s equally scary! That’s inhumane. I’d die, you know?

“That aside, Utano-san..”(renji)

” Hoh? ‘that aside’….?”(fairy)

“Utano-san, take this one with you, she’s really starting to scare me.”(renji)

“Don’t worry. I’m not scary, not scary at all.”

The way you’re speaking as if trying to persuade a pet animal only makes it more scary stupid!

“You two really do get along.”(utano)

“Eh, where? How?”(renji)

When I asked that, Utano-san simply gave a smile and Aya just gave a sigh. Anastasia simply silently pulled on my ear. It doesn’t hurt but it does tickle so really, stop. As my body stirred, she started putting more strength in her hands grabbing my ear as if she was having fun with it.

“Don’t start fighting and destroy the room, okay?”(aya)

“No need to worry. We won’t imitate you and Koutarou.”(renji)

“…….you still remember that?”(aya)

Surprised for a second, Aya then hid her face in embarrassment.

Once, while on our journey, those two fought in an inn which led to a full out magic battle inside a room. I don’t remember the reason behind their quarrel but I remember how troublesome it was to deal with it after wards. We had to pay so much just for the repairs.

But it sure was easy back then. The country would pay for all our expenses. Well, both me and Utano-san had to bow and apologise to the Knight commander O’brien who was travelling with us along with the Knight Order though. It can’t be helped. It was totally our fault after all. Well, Aya and Koutarou’s fault to be exact.

“How nostalgic. Also…..you sure remember everything concerning Aya eh Yamada-kun?”(utano)

“Yuuko-san!”(aya)

“No need to react that much. Don’t drop the plates you’re carrying, okay?”(utano)

“Uu…..uuu”

While talking like that, those two left the room.

“Ah, Yamada-kun?”(utano)

“Hm?”

“Come to my room at night. I’ll be waiting for you.”

Saying that at the very end, she left. Aya seemed surprised, or rather, was blushing madly. Well since it’s Utano-san we’re talking about, she’s probably just wants to talk about what we’ll do next. There’s the matter of the Demon God’s heart as well. I’m not very excited about this. I have already had my expectations destroyed countless times by her like this. Even I’d learn after failing so many times.

Aya though, I wonder what she imagined? I’m definitely gonna tease her about this later.

“What does she mean?”(fairy)

“Well, it’s adult talk, you don’t have to worry.”(renji)

“.....”

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With Anastasia still on my right shoulder, I left the room. I did try lying back down on my bed but ended up feeling way too bored. Since I had been sleeping for 5 days already, I didn't feel like sleeping either. It didn't feel right to keep on lying on my bed needlessly. So, I decided to leave the room for a walk. It's necessary to move my dull body as well after all.

"just when I was finally free from Ermenhilde, now I have to deal with you eh……."(renji)

"What's up with that? Even though I'm keeping you company so that you don't start feeling lonely."(fairy)

"Yeah yeah. Thank you very much for that."

"I don't feel like you meant a single word of that though?"

"Oh I am very thankful, really, Anastasia-sama."

Angrily, or rather sulkily, Anastasia turned her head away to the other side. Instead of the usual Ermenhilde, now I have Anastasia to talk to. Can I never get some alone time?

While thinking like that, I walked through the empty corridor. The brand new leather boots prepared for me made a dull sound as I walked. It was a bit chilly here but since the weather was nice, I'm sure my body will

warm up as I walk.

Even though I was bedridden till just now, I have become able to walk just after one meal. The cheat abilities sure are something. Not just our physical abilities, even our restorative capacities are in a level above normal. Well, I'm still nowhere near the superhuman levels Souichi and others have either. If it were those guys, they'd probably be able to move around almost instantly after resting.

"You have a gorgeous fairy walking with you, you sure are a human living in extravagance aren't you?"(fairy)

"You're not supposed to say that yourself, you know?"

Well, true, Anastasia is definitely a beauty. With curly green hair and wings on her back. A fairy, that only existed in tales and legends in our world, existed here as if it was common sense. And for some reason also sitting on my shoulder. She's only 15 cm tall but even then her beauty is incredible. Other women around me—-like Aya or Utano-san were beautiful as well but Anastasia's beauty was almost unrealistic. Her body even had curves and covered with the thin silky white dress, it's safe to say that it was poison for any man's eyes, even at her size. Even like this, she's cute like a doll. Well, she's actually a fairy though. As expected, I wouldn't harbour weird thoughts for a fairy the size of a doll. I'm not far off gone yet, neither am I that thirsty. In fact, if I ever did end up looking at this pipsqueak in that way, I think I would have lost then. And somehow, Anastasia also understands my thoughts so she'd often tease me in that manner. Back then, Koutarou and other who were excited about getting summoned to another world were getting excited saying "It's a fantasy world!" when they met her but apparently in Anastasia's eyes, that reaction was an instant 'out'. Though in my opinion those kinds of guys would be more fun to tease like this though. But for some reason,

she decided that I'll be the only one who'd have to deal with her teasing. I don't understand the basis behind it at all.

She'd also get into a lot of fights with Ermenhilde as well. I guess it's that, 'the more they fight, the closer they are', or something like that.

"If only your personality wasn't like that.."(renjii)

"Oh? What does that mean I wonder?"

"Who knows indeed.."

But still, how come I haven't seen any other people even though its still bright outside? It felt as if we were the only people in the astle.

"Where are you heading?"(fairy)

"Nowhere particular."

I left only because I was bored inside my room. It's not like I had decided on a destination when I left.

And for some reason, Anastasia, Aya and Utano-san, not a single one of them would tell me where Ermenhilde was.

Even I won't try running away after all this time.....probably. I'm a bit worried for Feirona and the others as well. I want to go and meet them.

“Haah…..then let’s head to the training ground maybe? Yui and others should be there right now.”(fairy)

“I see.”

Anastasia said that as if fed up. Well, since I really didn’t have anywhere I had to go, I turned to move towards the training grounds. 3 years ago, though not for long, but I did live here. I remember the way. Taking a right, I went down the staircase where I met a few of the soldiers on guard duty. I finally met people inside the castle but even when I greet them they’d simply salute. They sure have been trained well. I ended up admiring them. Though it’d be nice if they’d just greet back when I do so. I am just an adventurer now.

I may have been summoned as a Hero back then but the reason why I was summoned has been completed. For someone like me who can only fight at his fullest against the Demon God, I don’t think I have much value left now. But even then, the gazes of the soldiers I passed through were as if they were seeing something sacred, filled with zeal and passion. In my old world, I would never get something like this I ended up feeling confused as to how I should act.

She must have felt something about this as Anastasia began to poke my cheek as soon as we were out of the soldiers vision.

“Why the hell are you getting all nervous for?”(fairy)

“I’m not really getting nervous to be honest.”

If I were to choose, what I felt was more closer to guilt rather than nervousness. During the journey, I was of use only at the very end. And that power as well was achieved at the cost of countless sacrifices. But the Demon God is no more. And his descendants can be defeated even without my help. And when even those would have disappeared———my cheat will become completely useless. A GodSlaying weapon is useful only till there is a god that needs to be killed.

What worth does a human like that even have. Without that, I am nothing more than an adventurer and Ermenhilde is nothing more than a talking medal. Well, that's rare in its own way though.

……..And to be honest, I have no problem with that but what does Ermenhilde think about that? Will it still ask me to treat it as a weapon? Or……. I want Ermenhilde to find a path where it isn't a weapon anymore. That's why I wanted to show the world to Ermenhilde to open up its choices.——I want to find that path together. That is the reason behind my journey. Even I think that it's a really immature objective though. Well, I think Utano-san might have realized that already though. Her intuition is way too sharp.

"What happened, sighing like that. Is there a problem?"(fairy)

"Just felt a bit ashamed.."

"Haah?"

When I said that, Anastasia made a surprised sound.

To them, I may be a hero who saved the world. But I chose Ermenhilde over the world. Rather than supporting the whole world, I ended up deciding to chose to support just my partner. I don't even have the resolve of a hero, and not to mention that I have to put others in danger just to fight properly. There's no way you can call that a hero. That's why —-those gazes, from soldiers whose names I don't even know, felt heavy.

"This is the castle of humans and you are the hero of those humans. Act more confidently……you're so not cool at times."(fairy)

"I feel like I'm never able to act cool though?"

I have not been living a life where I could be called 'cool'. I'm just desperate. And was able to luckily survive till the end, that's all.

Anastasia seems to understand that as well as she poked my cheek while smiling. Her tiny finger felt a bit ticklish and I stiffened my face at that. My reaction must have felt amusing as Anastasia started laughing in a small voice.

"Well, that's true as well I guess."(fairy)

"Aren't you supposed to refute me there?"(renji)

"You want me to refute you when you yourself said that first?"

"Yeah."

“I really don’t get you.”

While we were talking, some well dressed nobles appeared to pass by in front of us.

As I let them go first, they looked at me confusedly.

Well, I guess they can’t help it either. I’m dressed in nothing more than a nice tunic and trousers. That’s not how normal people dress when inside the royal castle. The soldiers may remember me since I frequently went to the training ground 3 years ago but I doubt the nobles would. Not to mention I never returned here after the Demon God was subjugated. So I never had a chance to meet these nobles face to face like my other comrades. I hate things like banquets and parties so even in those I’d simply stand near some wall. There’d be very few nobles who’d remember me.

They must have found it even weirder that such a human had the fairy queen Anastasia, contracted to the Hero Hiyuu Yui, on his shoulders. They must have decided that it must be one of Anastasia’s whims since they didn’t ask me anything.

“Normally, they should be the ones to let us pass first you know?”(fairy)

“Not really.”

I don’t really understand how administration of land etc works, but I know that its these nobles who are running the country. They are much

more useful than me, who only knows how to swing his sword, now that world is free of the Demon God.

"You're such a….Why do you always put yourself below everyone else?"(fairy)

As I walked towards the training ground, Anastasia said that to me. Whether it be her or Ermenhilde, why does everyone say the same thing to me? Compared to Souichi or the others, my achievements and abilities are both way below them.

"That's just my nature."(renji)

"That's not a 'nature' it's a disease…….Fix it, it's not cool."

She said that not in her usual playful voice but in a more serious—truly like the queen of fairies.

"I am fine the way I am. I find even my current status to be more than what I deserve to be honest."(renji)

"You may say that modesty is a virtue but from my point of view, excess modesty is simply being servile. It's unsightly. It doesn't suit you Yamada Renji."

"…….You say the same things as Ermenhilde."

"No way!?!"

Her queen like pressure instantly dissipated. How flimsy is your character. While getting amazed by that, I sighed. How should I say this..

"You haven't changed at all."(renji)

"Renji, you have become more depraved though. Back then, you were more energetic."(fairy)

"Well, I've lost my objective for coming to this world after all. It's obvious I'll become lazy."

The Demon God had to be taken down urgently. As long as that thing was alive, lives were being taken. We couldn't forgive that which is why we went and killed it in a matter of 2 years. Putting our lives on the line, after making countless sacrifices, gaining the trust of many, and to stand up to the expectations of the whole world.

Once again, I passed a few soldiers. This time, they went and bowed to me……Really, just stop. I really don't like being in such a position. As if she read through my mind, Anastasia gave a sigh.

"The world's finally heading to peace, I'd say I'm allowed to live leisurely aren't I?"(renji)

"Well, I think the same way. After all, we are travelling all around the world on Fafnir. Yui has become quite able to talk with people on her own, you know?"

“Oh, that’s great. Back then she’d always hide behind mine or Kuuki’s back after all.”

“Seriously. Our master sure is a timid person.”

I find that as one her good points though. As a man, you’d end up wanting to protect her no matter what when she acts like that. How should I say it, she’s like a small animal. That’s what Yui-chan is like. Has a small voice, even her height——well she was the youngest of us all so I guess that couldn’t be helped.

As I was reminiscing about the past, Anastasia, this time, pinched my cheek. Still really didn’t hurt though.

“Like I said, don’t think about other women even when you’re with a beauty like me.”

“Other women, you say……..she’s your master, you know.”

“Even then! You really don’t understand a woman’s heart Renji.”

“Well, I am man after all.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. Even without understanding them, worrying and paying attention to a woman is what makes a good man, Renji.”

That sure sounds difficult. As I shrugged my shoulders, my cheek was

pinched again. If I treated her like a woman, I'll only get teased for it so I don't want to do it……..I guess that's just me being rude though.

It seemed that she also understood my thoughts since she didn't actually get angry. She was actually smiling, in fact. Really, how does a woman's heart even work? I really won't understand them till the end of my life.

"Is that how it works?"(renji)

"That's how it works indeed."

How many times have I gone through this kind of conversation? Though my partner would change from Utano-san, Aya and now Anastasia. Basically, I'm being told to understand a woman's heart more it seems. Even though I am actually trying to get better at that you know.

There was only one who told me that it wasn't necessary to understand her womanly heart. Thinking till that, I shook my head. At the same time, my head was hit by Anastasia again.

"Sorry."(renji)

"Since you apologised in advance, I'll forgive you this time."(fairy)

"Why thank you."

"Be grateful, okay?"

“Oh I am grateful indeed, Anastasia-sama.”

When spoke jokingly, she hit my head again. After walking for a while, I finally reached the entrance to the training ground. On both sides of the corridor were iron swords, spears, axes, and shields, leaning against the walls. As I looked at the nostalgic view, I felt unspeakably calm inside.

This is it. The place where I started. The place where I, who had a weak cheat, first gained the power to actually fight. The place I learned the way of using weapons.

For some reason, my heart began beating loudly. I was slightly, excited inside. I myself had not realized that my footsteps had gotten lighter as I crossed the gate.

“He’s a man, after all.”

Anastasia said something in a small voice but I ignored it and entered the training ground as every soldier’s gaze concentrated towards me. That was, nostalgic as well. I also noticed some faces I recognised.

The square shaped ground was huge; even with a few hundred soldiers training at the same time, there was still space left.

Right now, at the centre of this ground was a deep crimson dragon resting while coiled up. The sunshine must have felt nice to it as it didn’t seem to move and seemed to be sleeping. Though I doubt it’s actually asleep. It’s very sensitive to the presence of others after all. Though it

remained with its eyes closed even when I entered the ground.

As I looked at the surroundings, my gaze met with few soldiers again. This time, they waved their hands at me with a happy smile. To me, that reaction is many times better than the admiring gazes I'd get.

While greeting them with a slight bow, I walked towards the familiar deep crimson body—towards Fafnir. The surroundings seemed to become noisy but I didn't pay them any mind.

Becoming aware of my presence, it felt as if the dragon slightly stirred.

"It's been a long time, fool."

"Wow, that hurt."(renji)

My face cramped at its very first words. Well true, I am in fact a fool. A fool that chose Ermenhilde over the world, over my comrades. But still, that's not how you should start a conversation you know?

It opened its eyes and its golden eyes pierced through me. Its body was over 30m in size, even its head alone was bigger than me. Its head suddenly closed in on me and its breath made my hair sway. Its pressure alone made my body freeze.

"You've changed."

"Hm?"

I took a step back. I may not have spent much time with it as a comrade but I am well aware of its personality. It's not really angry, neither is it amused. In the first place, it wouldn't really care about the actions of a single human. The reason I took a step back was because its head was too close to me and its every breath was almost painful. Anastasia was almost blown away by it. She hugged my face tightly but that's making me feel all sorts of softness so really, just stop.

It's single word resounded through my body like thunder. This is a dragon. An existence that could be called one of the strongest beings in this world. It's single breath could burn away the land and could break through the atmosphere with its wings. It's claws were sharper than steel and a single swing from its tail could turn even an Ogre to meat paste. It was an existence that could be considered abnormal even by cheat users like us. This was Fafnir. The strongest Dragon King.

By the way, though, the reason he became our comrade—-became contracted to Yui-chan was absolutely stupid.

A spear had stabbed into the sole of its foot and it couldn't take it out by itself. As it was rampaging around in pain, we defeated it and Yui-chan who learnt the reason behind its rampage took out the spear and saved it. Truly, absolutely, stupid reason.

Well, though the reason was stupid indeed, we almost died while facing the rampaging Fafnir. I still have a bit of trauma from that. Souichi, Masaki-chan, Aya, Kuuki; every fighting specialised member fought against it and they could barely succeeded in just bringing the flying dragon down to the ground.

“You’ve lost your ambition. You’ve grown cowardly, God Slayer.”(faf)

“It can’t be helped. I did something incredible as killing a God even though I’m just a human. It’s normal that I’ve lost all my energy after that.”

Though I wonder if I ever had something as grand as some ambition in me.

“You killed it with pure hatred. No maybe that’s why you’ve grown cowardly now.”(faf)

“……coward, coward. You really don’t hold back, do you?”

“But of course. You’re completely different from what you were an year ago.”(fairy)

“After all you’ve changed from the man that this little insect fell in love with.”(faf)

“Who are you calling an insect?!?”(fairy)

Wait, that’s what you’re angry about?

“Eh, what? Did you perhaps like me or something?”(renji)

“Don’t get conceited, you incompetent fool!!”(fairy)

“Wow, that really hurts you know..”(renji)

Even though it was Fafnir who said that, why am I the one getting scolded? Not to mention, she’s angrier than when I joked about her weight.

“Just when I thought it had gotten quieter, it’s become noisy again.”

When I said that, Fafnir closed its eyes again. As it lay its neck back to the ground, it felt as if the ground slightly trembled. That’s how much pressure this dragon gives off. Its every small action makes one nervous. Is this the disposition of a King? As expected of an existence that is considered superior by even the Demon King, who rules over all the monsters

“Yui was worried about you. Don’t make her worry too much, GodSlayer. She’s a crybaby after all……when she cries, she’s more troublesome than that insect over there.”(faf)

“I don’t really mean to do that.”(renji)

I definitely do not enjoy making women cry. When I said that, I felt as if the pressure from the dragon in front of me lessened a bit. It talks harshly but worries about Yui-chan the most. I could feel a connection between them not just that of a monster tamer and dragon but something more. Even Anastasia, who was being noisy, went silent when Yui-chan’s name came up. There as well, like Fafnir—-I could sense a bond and emotions. As my cheeks loosened in a smile, Fafnir opened its eyes again.

“What?”(faf)

“You’ve changed as well.”(renji)

“—-Mu.”(faf)

“It’s being tsundere, I tell you. It tries to act cold and aloof but was also worried about you Renji.”(fairy)

“That word does not suit at all so please stop, Anastasia.”(renji)

Don’t say things like ‘Tsundere’ while in a fantasy world. Think about my dreams and hopes.

“What does that word even mean? I do not understand the word but it feels very unpleasant.”(faf)

“If you’ve got a complaint, take it Koutarou. I plan to as well.”(renji)

“Seriously……that brat is troublesome as well. Teaching weird words to this already noisy girl.”(faf)

But still, I looked around. There are soldiers who are looking at us curiously but the people I’m looking for aren’t here.

Yui-chan, Kuuki, and Knight. Where are they?

Well, Kuuki must be busy with work most probably.

“Where’s Yui-chan?”(renji)

“Went to look for you and that insect. Knight went with her.”(faf)

“Huh, we didn’t meet them though?”(fairy)

“Like I care. You must have missed each other.”(faf)

Well, that’s too bad. I should have lazed around in my room a bit more. Yup, let’s laze around in my room when I return.

I’ve been working too hard recently anyway, I should relax more it seems.

“That aside, Fafnir..”(renji)

“Hm?”

“Know where Ermenhilde is?”

“I don’t.”

Instant denial. Try to chose your words better can you? When the

conversation's cut like that, I can't keep on talking now can I?

"Who cares about that medal woman?"(fairy)

"That won't do. She gets lonely pretty easily you know."(renji)

"……"

"Could you stop pulling my hair so silently. Please."

What if I go bald? This idiot.

But still, where have these guys kept Ermenhilde? She isn't of much use to others. Not to mention that she talks a lot.

Let's look for Kuuki now. I turned away from Fafnir and began walking.

I don't want to meet Commander O'brien even by a mistake though. That guy thinks with his muscles so if he found me who ran away to the villages, it'll end up being a physical talk instead. That alone, I really want to avoid. I'm still recovering. Well, I'd avoid him even if I wasn't.

"Renji."

While I was thinking of that, the Dragon King called me. By name, like back then. Happy of not getting called by that incredibly embarrassing title, I turned around as its golden eyes pierced through me again.

“What were you doing, for the past one year?”(faf)

“Travelling…..with Ermenhilde?”

It couldn’t be helped that it ended up seeming like a question. I was just lazing around in villages after all.

“No.”(faf)

But, as if not satisfied with my answer, the Dragon King looked down on me with strong eyes. His thunderous voice captured me. And his strong willed eyes saw through me. That one word alone, as if it held power, made my body tihten.

Yeah certainly, this is an existence far surpassing human kind. My weakness, pain, wounds, without minding any of those, it overpowered me.

“Why, do you obsess over Ermenhilde so much?”(faf)

“Because she’s my partner. And, I promised her…….that once we had peace, we’ll see the world together.”

(T/N: I’m going to use female pronouns for Ermenhilde from hereon as everyone else clearly refers to ermenhhilde as a woman. Though its interesting to note that in japanese, Renji himself has never used female pronoun for her. He always uses partner, gender neutral words or simply

uses her name.)

That's right. I promised her. My precious promise—-as precious as my own life. The gold coloured…..

"That's not it Yamada Renji."

Anastasia stood up from my shoulder and pulled on my clothes. She seems to be saying something but I couldn't hear her.

I couldn't move away from Fafnir's eyes. Rather than saying that I couldn't move my eyes away, it felt as if I would have lost if I did avert my eyes.

"That promise was made with Eru, not Ermenhilde."(faf)

"Yeah, that's right. That's why I'll fulfil that promise."

When I declared that—-

"I see."(faf)

Saying just that, it closed its eyes.

Released from the golden eyes, I breathed a sigh. For some reason, Anastasia was sighing as well. Normally, they'd talk lightly but as expected, there are levels of difference between a Dragon and a Fairy.

Even I could only whisper to myself that it really was a dragon that went all out even against his comrades.

“Let’s go. Let’s look for Kuuki next.”(renji)

“Ye—yeah. Let’s do that. Since Yui is looking for us as well, we’ll meet sooner or later.”(fairy)

“Well then, see ya later, Fafnir.”(renji)

“Yes. Next time, I want to meet the not-cowardly you, Renji.”(faf)

“I’ll try to live up to your expectations.”

Saying that, I shrugged my shoulders. But Fafnir wasn’t even looking at me.

LN Volume 3 Illustrations [Spoilers]

So it’s been a few days since Volume 3 came out. Now, I havent read the novel (I haven’t even started the 2nd one. No time.) but going by the illustrations, the events in volume 3 seems to have changed quite a bit. Also, these illustrations contain some VERY HEAVY SPOILERS, the last image to be exact , which you would definitely recognize from the most recent chapter you read here. I don’t like how they gave such a big reveal away so easily in the illustrations but whatever. -_-

Utano is hot! Definitely best waifu.

https://shikkakutranslations.org/kamigoroshi-no-eiyuu-to-nanatsu-no-seiyaku/kens-ln-volume-3-illustrations-heavy-spoilers/